

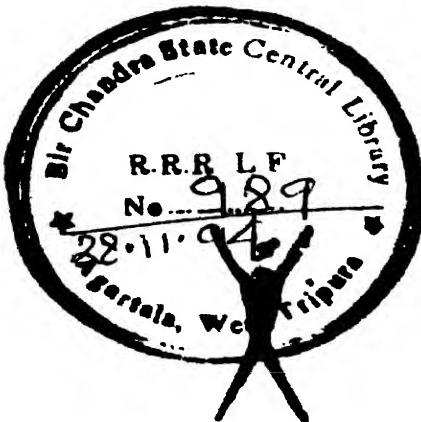
A COMPREHENSIVE HISTORY OF INDIA

Volume Nine
(1712 - 1772)

Edited by

Dr. A. C. BANERJEE
Dr. D. K. GHOSE

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FOREWORD

THE PUBLICATION COMMITTEE and the Editorial Board of the Comprehensive History of India Project of the Indian History Congress have great pleasure in presenting Volume IX, the third to be published in the series so far. It has taken a very long time for the Project to materialise and the Editorial Board is fully conscious of the long delay which has occurred in the publication of the various volumes. I regret that it has taken several years from the publication of Volume II of the series before the third could be published. Many circumstances have contributed to this long delay and I crave indulgence of the general public for the slow progress of the scheme. However, I hope that with two volumes in the press, the progress in publication will be quicker now.

The present volume deals with the period 1712-1772 A.D. in which the Mughal Empire gradually crumbled and the Maratha Confederacy established its hold over large parts of the country. However, at the same time the foundations of British rule under the East India Company were securely laid. I hope the present volume will help in clearly explaining the factors and indicate the forces which led to the ultimate establishment of British rule in India.

I express my grateful thanks to the joint editors, Professor A. C. Banerjee and Professor D. K. Ghose, for the attention and industry which they have applied to this work in the spirit of dedication without which its publication would have been well nigh impossible. I am also thankful to the contributors who wrote the various chapters. Most of the chapters of this volume had been written more than two decades back and had to undergo various revisions before publication. They deserve all our grateful thanks for undertaking this labour of love, without grudging time and energy, motivated solely by their desire to help the advancement of Indian historical scholarship. I also avail of this opportunity of recording our deep obligation to the donors whose generosity has made possible the preparation of the

Comprehensive History of India. Lastly, I acknowledge with thanks the cooperation of the People's Publishing House (Private) Limited who have undertaken to publish this Volume.

BISHESHWAR PRASAD

Secretary

Editorial Board

"Comprehensive History of India"

PREFACE

THE PUBLICATION OF THIS VOLUME has been delayed by unforeseen difficulties, particularly in connection with printing. The editors have to convey their grateful thanks to the contributors, some of whom—to their great regret—passed away before their valuable work could be presented to the public. Dr. Bisheshwar Prasad, Secretary of the Editorial Board, who is also one of the contributors, came forward at every stage to solve the editors' problems. The bibliography owes much to Dr. Radhe Shyam of Allahabad University.

In a co-operative work of this type it is not possible to avoid either a certain amount of overlapping or occasional conflict of views in chapters written by different scholars. The editors have tried to make the surface as smooth as possible without interfering with the contributors' right to express their own views in their own way. The struggle for power, following the decline of the Mughal Empire, has been taken as the central theme. Regional political developments have been given due importance, but the all-India perspective has never been lost sight of.

No historian, however well-equipped, analytical and critical, can claim to have said the last word on any subject. This statement applies with special force to the present stage of historical research in India. Our contributors used and interpreted such materials as were available at the time of writing. New materials and new points of view must claim the attention of successive generations of seekers after historical truth. But the editors firmly believe that the stage of historical thinking represented by this volume will not cease to be of primary importance for many years to come.

A. C. BANERJEE
D. K. GHOSE

CONTENTS

<i>Foreword</i>	v
<i>Preface</i>	vii
<i>Contributors</i>	xx
<i>Chapter One</i>	
Successors of Bahadur Shah (1712-1748)	1-33
(i) Sons of Bahadur Shah	1
(ii) Plans for Partition of Empire	3
(iii) War of Succession	4
(iv) Reign of Jahandar Shah (1712-13)	6
(v) Fate of Jahandar Shah	8
(vi) Reign of Farrukh-Siyar (1713-19)	11
(vii) Sayyid Brothers versus Farrukh-Siyar	14
(viii) Fall of Farrukh-Siyar	16
(ix) Sayyids as King-Makers	17
(x) Fall of Sayyid Brothers	18
(xi) Religious Trouble in Kashmir	24
(xii) Reign of Muhammad Shah (1719-48)	25
(xiii) Bundelas and Jats	27
(xiv) Failure of Nizam-ul-Mulk	29
(xv) Invasion of Nadir Shah	30
(xvi) Decline of Nobility	30
(xvii) Disintegration of Empire	31
(xviii) Invasion of Ahmad Shah Abdali	33
<i>Chapter Two</i>	
Successors of Muhammad Shah : End of Imperial Authority (1748-1771)	34-63
(i) Empire in Decadence	34
(ii) Ahmad Shah and His Favourites	35
(iii) Safdar Jang as Wazir	37
(iv) Rise of Imad-Ul-Mulk	40

(v)	Fall of Ahmad Shah	42
(vi)	Reign of Alamgir II (1754-59)	44
(vii)	Invasion of Ahmad Shah Abdali	48
(viii)	Adventures of Ali Gauhar	49
(ix)	Murder of Alamgir II	50
(x)	Panipat	51
(xi)	Najib Khan as Dictator of Delhi (1761-70)	52
(xii)	Najib and Jats	53
(xiii)	Najib's Last Years	55
(xiv)	Shah Alam II	57
(xv)	Shah Alam's Military Adventures	58
(xvi)	Shah Alam as Company's Protege	60
(xvii)	Shah Alam in Delhi	61
(xviii)	Sunset of Mughal Empire	61

Chapter Three

Invasions From the North-West		64-98
(i)	Undefended Afghanistan	65
(ii)	Rise of Nadir Shah	66
(iii)	Nadir Shah's March to India	67
(iv)	Battle of Karnal	68
(v)	Sa'adat Khan's Treachery	72
(vi)	Nadir Shah in Delhi	73
(vii)	Rise of Ahmad Shah Abdali	77
(viii)	Abdali's First Invasion (1747-48)	78
(ix)	Battle of Manupur	82
(x)	Abdali's Second Invasion (1749-50)	83
(xi)	Abdali's Third Invasion (1751-52)	84
(xii)	Abdali's Fourth Invasion (1756-57)	86
(xiii)	Abdali's Fifth Invasion (1759-61): Battle of Panipat	93

Chapter Four

Avadh Under the Nawabs (1722-1772)		99-136
(i)	Saadat Khan's Early Career	99
(ii)	Barons of Avadh	100
(iii)	Consolidation of Saadat Khan's Authority	100
(iv)	Sa'adat Khan and Nadir Shah's Invasion	102
(v)	Succession in Avadh: Safdar Jang	103
(vi)	Safdar Jang and Rebellious Barons	104
(vii)	Safdar Jang's Bengal Expedition	105

(viii)	Safdar Jang and Ruhelkhand	106
(ix)	Safdar Jang's Promotion to Wazirship	107
(x)	Safdar Jang as Wazir: Court Politics	108
(xi)	Safdar Jang, Jats and Afghans	110
(xii)	Safdar Jang, Marathas and Afghans	113
(xiii)	Safdar Jang's Loss of Wazir's Office	116
(xiv)	Succession of Shuja-ud-Daulah	120
(xv)	Shuja-ud-Daulah and Marathas: Panipat	121
(xvi)	Shuja-ud-Daulah and Shah Alam II: Expedition to Bundelkhand	122
(xvii)	Shuja-ud-Daulah and the English	124
(xviii)	Shuja-ud-Daulah and Mir Qasim	124
(xix)	Battle of Buxar	125
(xx)	After Buxar	129
(xxi)	Clive's Treaty with Shuja	131
(xxii)	Shuja and the English, 1765-72: Treaty of Banaras	133
• (xxiii)	Shuja and Shah Alam, 1765-72	135
<i>Chapter Five</i>		
Ruhelkhand and Farrukhabad		137-166
(i)	Katehar: Adopted Home of Ruhelas	138
(ii)	Daud Khan Ruhela	139
(iii)	Ali Muhammad Ruhela: Early Career	141
(iv)	Ali Muhammad and Mughal Government	143
(v)	Ali Muhammad: Extension of Territory	146
(vi)	Ali Muhammad and Safdar Jang	147
(vii)	Ali Muhammad at Sirhind	150
(viii)	Safdar Jang and Ruhelkhand	152
(ix)	Safdar Jang and Farrukhabad	154
(x)	Avadh, Ruhelas, Marathas and Abdali	157
(xi)	Ruhelas, Marathas and English	159
(xii)	Shuja-ud-Daulah's Aggressive Policy	162
<i>Chapter Six</i>		
Bengal Subah (1707-1756)		167-196.
(i)	Rise of Murshid Quli Khan	167
(ii)	Murshid Quli Khan as Administrator	170
(iii)	Murshid Quli and European Traders	171
(iv)	Succession to Murshid Quli Khan	173
(v)	Shuja-Ud-Din as Nawab	174
(vi)	Shuja-Ud-Din and European Traders	176

(vii)	Shuja-Ud-Din's Character	177
(viii)	Sarfraz Khan	178
(ix)	Alivardi Khan: Consolidation of Authority	179
(x)	Alivardi Khan: Subjugation of Orissa	180
(xi)	First Maratha Invasion (1742)	182
(xii)	Safdar Jang in Bihar (1742)	184
(xiii)	Second Maratha Invasion (1743)	184
(xiv)	Third Maratha Invasion (1744)	185
(xv)	Fourth Maratha Invasion (1745)	186
(xvi)	Fifth Maratha Invasion (1748)	187
(xvii)	Alivardi's Treaty with Marathas (1751)	188
(xviii)	Effects of Maratha Invasions	189
(xix)	Afghan Insurrections (1745, 1748)	189
(xx)	Alivardi and European Traders	192
(xxi)	Alivardi Khan as a Ruler	194
(xxii)	Alivardi's Character	195

Chapter Seven

The Deccan under the Asafjahi Nizams	197-230
(i) Early Career of Nizam-Ul-Mulk:	
Reign of Aurangzib	197
(ii) Career of Nizam-Ul-Mulk: Reign of Bahadur Shah	198
(iii) Nizam-Ul-Mulk as the Deccan Viceroy	199
(iv) Nizam-Ul-Mulk and Sayyid Brothers	202
(v) Nizam-Ul-Mulk's Mastery over the Deccan	204
(vi) Nizam-Ul-Mulk as Imperial Wazir	206
(vii) Nizam-Ul-Mulk as Independent Ruler	207
(viii) Nizam-Ul-Mulk and the Marathas	207
(ix) Nizam-Ul-Mulk in Imperial Affairs	210
(x) Nizam-Ul-Mulk and Invasion of Nadir Shah	212
(xi) Nasir Jang's Rebellion	214
(xii) Karnatak Affairs	215
(xiii) Relations with European Trading Nations	215
(xiv) Nizam-Ul-Mulk's Character	216
(xv) Nasir Jang and Muzaffar Jang	216
(xvi) Struggle for Karnatak	219
(xvii) Death of Nasir Jang	222
(xviii) Death of Muzaffar Jang: Salabat Jang and Bussy	225
(xix) Salabat Jang and the English	228
(xx) Maratha Intervention	228
(xxi) Nizam Ali's Reign	230

Chapter Eight

Rise of the Sikh Power	231-295
(i) Rise of Banda Singh	231
(ii) Banda Singh's Exploits	232
(iii) Conquest of Sirhind	233
(iv) Banda Singh as Ruler	235
(v) Invasion of the Gangetic Doab	237
(vi) Occupation of Jullundur Doab	238
(vii) Clash with Imperial Forces	239
(viii) Banda Singh in the Hills	241
(ix) Last Stand at Gurdas-Nangal	243
(x) Execution of Banda Singh	244
(xi) Estimate of Banda Singh	247
(xii) Differences	250
(xiii) The Khalsa	251
(xiv) Other Denominations	252
(xv) Persecution and Revenge	254
(xvi) Policy of Conciliation	255
(xvii) Organization of Dals	256
(xviii) Clashes with Government	256
(xix) Invasion of Nadir Shah	257
(xx) Further Persecution	258
(xxi) Lakhpat Rai and Sikhs	259
(xxii) First Ghallughara	259
(xxiii) First Invasion of Abdali	260
(xxiv) Revival of Sikh Offensive	261
(xxv) New Organization	262
(xxvi) Mir Mannu and the Sikhs	263
(xxvii) Second Invasion of Durrani	264
(xxviii) Third Invasion of Durrani	266
(xxix) Persecution Renewed	267
(xxx) Fourth Invasion of Abdali	270
(xxxi) Timur Shah and Sikhs	272
(xxxii) Marathas in the Punjab	273
(xxxiii) Adina Beg's Hostilities	275
(xxxiv) Fifth Invasion of Abdali: Panipat	277
(xxxv) Sikh Bid for Sovereignty	278
(xxxvi) Sixth Invasion of Abdali: Wadda Ghallughara	281
(xxxvii) Sikh Conquests	285
(xxxviii) Seventh Invasion of Abdali	288
(xxxix) Sikh Occupation of Lahore	292

(xl)	Further Conquests	292
(xli)	Eighth Expedition of Abdali	293
(xlii)	Sikh Rule from Doab to Attock	294
<i>Chapter Nine</i>		
The Rajput States (1712-1772)		296-343
(i)	Rajputs and Mughal Empire	296
(ii)	Mewar in Decline	299
(iii)	Marwar: Ajit Singh	302
(iv)	Marwar: Abhai Singh	307
(v)	Battle of Gangwana	308
(vi)	Clan Rivalries	310
(vii)	Civil War in Marwar	311
(viii)	Amber: Sawai Jai Singh	313
(ix)	Sawai Jai Singh and Imperial Politics	314
(x)	Sawai Jai Singh and Marathas	315
(xi)	Expansion of Amber Territory	317
(xii)	Amber and Bundi	319
(xiii)	Asvamedha	319
(xiv)	Social Reform	319
(xv)	Marathas in Rajputana: Early Expeditions	320
(xvi)	Jaipur: Ishwari Singh and Marathas	324
(xvii)	Bundi: End of Civil War	329
(xviii)	Marathas in Marwar	329
(xix)	Jaipur: Madho Singh and Marathas	331
(xx)	Marathas in Mewar	333
(xxi)	Rajputs after Panipat	335
(xxii)	Rajputs and Jats	337
(xxiii)	Minor States	339
(xxiv)	Rajput Decadence	341
<i>Chapter Ten</i>		
Rise of the Peshwas (1713-1740)		344-399
(i)	The Deccan in 1707	344
(ii)	Civil War: Shahu and Tarabai	345
(iii)	Early Career of Balaji Vishwanath	347
(iv)	Shahu and Mughal Government	349
(v)	Consolidation and Stabilization	350
(vi)	Balaji and Mughal Government	352
(vii)	Balaji's Achievements	357
(viii)	Maratha Administration	358

(ix)	Succession of Baji Rao	360
(x)	Baji Rao's First Quinquennium: Relations With Nizam-Ul-Mulk	361
(xi)	Palkhed and Mungi Sheogaon	365
(xii)	Emergence of Kolhapur State	369
(xiii)	Marathas in Malwa	369
(xiv)	Marathas in Bundelkhand	371
(xv)	Marathas in Gujarat	372
(xvi)	The Konkan	375
(xvii)	The Sidis	377
(xviii)	Maratha Advance in Malwa and Bundelkhand	382
(xix)	Baji Rao's Northern Expeditions (1735-37)	385
(xx)	Nizam's Defeat at Bhopal	389
(xxi)	Conquest of Bassein	391
(xxii)	Nadir Shah's Invasion	396
(xxiii)	Treaty with Nasir Jang	397
(xxiv)	Estimate of Baji Rao	395

Chapter Eleven

Maratha Expansion under Balaji Baji Rao	400-450	
(i)	Succession	400
(ii)	Agreement with Sambhaji	401
(iii)	Financial Problem	402
(iv)	Malwa Bundelkhand and Bengal	403
(v)	Settlement with Bhonsle	404
(vi)	Bundelkhand Again: Capture of Bhilsa	405
(vii)	Karnatak Affairs	405
(viii)	Court Affairs	408
(ix)	Rajputana Affairs	409
(x)	Shahu's Testament and Death	409
(xi)	Ram Raja	411
(xii)	Sangola Agreement	413
(xiii)	Tara Bai's Last Blow	414
(xiv)	Anglo-French Struggle	416
(xv)	Fall of Angrias	419
(xvi)	Murar Rao and Savanur	421
(xvii)	Last Phase of Karnatak Campaigns	422
(xviii)	Contest with Nizam: Udgir	424
(xix)	North Indian Political Scene	427
(xx)	Marathas, Safdar Jang and Afghans	428

(xxi)	Alliance with Emperor	429
(xxii)	Raghunath Rao's First North Indian Expedition	431
(xxiii)	Raghunath Rao's Second North Indian Expedition	433
(xxiv)	Holkar in Rajputana (1758-59)	436
(xxv)	Advance of Ahmad Shah Abdali (1759-60)	437
(xxvi)	Sadashiv Rao's North Indian Expedition	438
(xxvii)	Third Battle of Panipat	443
(xxviii)	Consequences of Maratha Defeat	448
(xxix)	Death of Balaji Baji Rao	449
(xxx)	Abdali's Peace Offer	449

Chapter Twelve

Peshwa Madhav Rao I	451-485
---------------------	---------

(i)	Crisis of 1761	451
(ii)	Invasion of Nizam Ali	452
(iii)	First Karnatak Expedition	455
(iv)	First Civil War: Rakshasbhuvan	456
(v)	Second Karnatak Expedition	458
(vi)	Expedition against Bhonsle	460
(vii)	Third Karnatak Expedition	462
(viii)	First Anglo-Mysore War: Mostvn's Embassy	464
(ix)	End of First Anglo-Mysore War	468
(x)	Second Civil War	469
(xi)	Campaign against Bhonsle: Treaty of Kanakapur	471
(xii)	Fourth Karnatak Expedition	473
(xiii)	The English and Maratha-Mysore War	478
(xiv)	Mostvn's Second Embassy	480
(xv)	Revival of Maratha Power in North India	480
(xvi)	Centrifugal Forces	482
(xvii)	Madhav Rao's Death	484

Chapter Thirteen

Marathas and North Indian States (1761-1772)	486-523
--	---------

(i)	Panipat	486
(ii)	Consequences of Panipat	486
(iii)	Peace Parleys and Najib-Ud-Daulah's Ascendancy in Delhi	488
(iv)	Revolts in North India	489
(v)	Difficulties of Marathas	492
(vi)	Changed Situation in North India	492
(vii)	The Jats: Suraj Mal	495

(viii)	Jat-Ruhela Conflict: Role of Marathas	497
(ix)	Collapse of Najib-Ud-Daulah's Authority	500
(x)	Return of Marathas to North India	502
(xi)	Holkar, Shuja-Ud-Daulah and the English	503
(xii)	Holkar in Bundelkhand	504
(xiii)	Mahadji Sindhia in Rajputana	505
(xiv)	Maratha-Jat Contest	506
(xv)	Raghunath Rao in Malwa	507
(xvi)	Decline of Jat Power	510
(xvii)	Maratha Expedition to North India	512
(xviii)	Malwa Bundelkhand and Rajputana	513
(xix)	Maratha Campaign against Jats	514
(xx)	Maratha Campaign against Ruhelas	516
(xxi)	Peshwa's Directive	517
(xxii)	Occupation of Delhi: Shah Alam's Return	518
(xxiii)	Fall of Zabita Khan	520
(xxiv)	Shuja's Treaty with Ruhelas	521
(xxv)	End of Maratha Expedition	522

Chapter Fourteen

Foundation and Early History of the Dutch-English and French East India Companies	524-589
--	---------

(i)	English Search for Sea Routes to India	524
(ii)	Early Dutch Maritime Enterprise	526
(iii)	The Dutch United East India Company	529
(iv)	The Dutch in the Archipelago	529
(v)	The English East India Company	531
(vi)	Anglo-Dutch Rivalry in the Archipelago: Amboyna	532
(vii)	Dutch Settlements in India	535
(viii)	The Dutch in Ceylon	538
(ix)	The Dutch in Malabar	541
(x)	Expansion of English Trade: Surat	542
(xi)	Company and Home Government	546
(xii)	Cromwell and the Company	550
(xiii)	Policy of Charles II	552
(xiv)	The English at Madras	554
(xv)	The English at Bombay	560
(xvi)	Early English Settlements in Bengal	567
(xvii)	Foundation of Calcutta	570
(xviii)	Interlopers	573
(xix)	New Company	576

(xx)	Union of Two Companies	580
(xxi)	Early French Settlements in India	583
(xxii)	Early French Settlements	585
(xxiii)	Martin and Pondicherry	586
(xxiv)	Decline of French Influence	589

Chapter Fifteen

History of South India, Including European Struggles

Down to 1763

590-645

(i)	Subah of Karnatak	590
(ii)	Tanjore, Madura and Rannad	591
(iii)	Pudukkottai	592
(iv)	Maratha Expeditions into Karnatak	594
(v)	Sa'adatulah, Dost Ali and Chanda Sahib	595
(vi)	Developments at Tanjore	597
(vii)	Travancore	599
(viii)	The English Company	600
(ix)	The Ostend Company	601
(x)	The English at Madras	602
(xi)	The English in Bengal	604
(xii)	The English at Bombay	606
(xiii)	The French Company	606
(xiv)	Vicissitudes in Karnatak	609
(xv)	First Anglo-French War	612
(xvi)	Second Anglo-French War	617
(xvii)	End of Chanda Sahib	620
(xviii)	Second Anglo-French War Continued	625
(xix)	Recall of Dupleix: Treaty of Pondicherry	630
(xx)	Uncasy Anglo-French Peace	632
(xxi)	Outbreak of Seven Years' War	635
(xxii)	Arrival of Lally: Fall of St David	636
(xxiii)	Lally's Tanjore Campaign	636
(xxiv)	Forde's Victory	637
(xxv)	Siege of Madras	637
(xxvi)	Fall of Masulipatam	639
(xxvii)	Battle of Wandiwash	639
(xxviii)	Fall of Pondicherry	641
(xxix)	Causes of French Defeat	642

Chapter Sixteen

Bengal under British Protectorate (1757-1765)

646-688

(i)	Accession of Siraj-Ud-Daulah	646
-----	------------------------------	-----

(ii)	Causes of Siraj-Ud-Daulah's War with the English	649
(iii)	Capture of Calcutta by Siraj-ud-Daulah	654
(iv)	Holwell's 'Black Hole' Story	655
(v)	Fate of Other English Factories	656
(vi)	Death of Shaukat Jang	656
(vii)	Recovery of Calcutta by the English	657
(viii)	Capture of Chandernagar by the English	660
(ix)	Conspiracy against Siraj-ud-Daulah	662
(x)	Battle of Plassey	664
(xi)	End of Siraj-Ud-Daulah	667
(xii)	Consequences of Plassey	667
(xiii)	Mir Jafar's First Administration (1757-60)	669
(xiv)	Shah Alam's First Invasion	670
(xv)	Shah Alam's Second Invasion	671
(xvi)	Anglo-Dutch Conflict	673
(xvii)	Revolution of 1760	675
(xviii)	Shah Alam's Third Invasion	677
(xix)	Mir Qasim's Administration	677
(xx)	Mir Qasim's War with the English	680
(xxi)	Battle of Buxar	683
(xxii)	Treaties with Bengal Nawabs	686

Chapter Seventeen

Bengal under Diwani Administration (1765-1772)	689-725	
(i)	'Double Government'	689
(ii)	Scope of Diwani	692
(iii)	Revenue System	695
(iv)	Supervisors	702
(v)	Directors' Plan of Reform	707
(vi)	Famine of 1770	709
(vii)	Administration of Justice	710
(viii)	Inland Trade	715
(ix)	Company's Army	719
(x)	Civil Versus Military Power	720
(xi)	Relations with Country Powers	722
(xii)	The French and the Dutch	727
(xiii)	Tyranny and Exploitation	727

Bibliography

729

Index

759

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CHAPTER ONE

SUCCESSORS OF BAHADUR SHAH (1712-1748)

BAHADUR SHAH died on 27 February 1712. He was the last of the Mughal sovereigns who reigned as well as ruled. With his death came to a close the age of kings and commenced the era of puppets.

SONS OF BAHADUR SHAH

The emperor left behind him a numerous progeny. His eldest son Jahandar Shah was weak, 'effeminately careful of his person, fond of ease, indolent, and totally ignorant of the art of government'.¹ Though a good soldier, he had also blemishes and vices unworthy of royalty, and unknown among his illustrious ancestors.² Nor did he enjoy the favours of his father, which proved a great handicap to him. The second son Azim-us-shan was 'well-versed in the intrigues of a court'.³ He had gained a good deal of political and administrative insight as viceroy of Bengal. His large store of wealth was at once the envy and despair of his rivals.⁴ Even his father had to draw upon his financial resources to maintain his royal household. Naturally his following was larger than that of his brothers. But he was parsimonious in distributing gifts, and was blinded by an over-estimate of his own striking power. He lacked the dash and drive of a Murad or an Azam. He believed in playing a waiting game, and he lost it. The third son Rafi-us-shan, in certain respects, resembled his eldest brother. "He possessed the heart of a courtesan, and spent his time in adorning his person."⁵ The youngest son Jahan Shah was of 'a haughty and independent spirit, ready to take fire on the smallest neglect'.⁶ Even his attendants were rude and impertinent. But he had warmed himself into the affections of his father. In brief, none of these princes was fit to shoulder the responsibilities of kingship, particularly when the empire had entered into the critical stage of dissolution; nor were the

. 1 Iradat Khan, *Tarikh-i-Iradat Khan*, 26b., *Risâla Khan-i-Daurân-wa-Muhammâd Shah*, 70b.

2 Iradat Khan, 26a. 3 *Ibid.*

4 *Ibid.*, 26b-27a.

5 *Ibid.*, 26b. Qasim, 38a.

6 Qasim, 38a.

SUCCESSORS OF BAHADUR SHAH

advisers of the *faincants* men of mettle, honest, and self-sacrificing. They were bands of opportunists, more interested in themselves than in the empire.

In fact, ever since the closing years of Aurangzib's reign the imperial court had become a hot-bed of strife and intrigue. Love of power egged on the ambitions of nobles and provincial governors. Though they remained steady in their loyalty to the house of Babur till the end of Bahadur Shah's reign and refrained from lording it over the emperor, after the latter's death their attitude and alignments began to change with kaleidoscopic rapidity. The vices of the feudalistic scheme of political organization, so long kept in check by the dominance of the emperors, began to assert themselves with ever-increasing violence. The puppet sovereigns could not resist the process of disintegration; its fury tossed them to and fro like shuttle-cocks.

Shortly before his father's death Azim-us-shan, with the assistance of Khan Khanan Munim Khan, had managed to gain influence over the mind of the aged emperor⁷. The credit, thus obtained, was employed by him in softening the rigour of the imperial government against those who had laboured under its displeasure. He hoped that, thus obliged by his mediation, they would readily return his favours by embracing his cause, whenever the death of his father should bring to the fore his claim to the empire. But Khan Khanan expired before the dreams of his protege could materialise; the apple-cart of Azim-us-shan's calculations was turned upside down. The death of Khan Khanan paved the way for the dominance of the Amīr-ul-umārā Zulfiqar Khan, son of the Vakil-i-mutlaq Asad Khan.⁸ The Amīr-ul-umārā had a fair pretext for grievance against the prince, because, on Khan Khanan's death, Azim-us-shan had pressed for the vacant post of wazir the claims of the deceased wazir's son Mahabat Khan, in preference to those of the Amīr-ul-umārā.⁹ Therefore an alliance between Zulfiqar Khan and Azim-us-shan was out of question. Nevertheless, the latter could count upon the support of several prominent nobles, Hindu and Muslim.

But the fact of the matter is that after the death of Khan Khanan and the emperor Bahadur Shah, Zulfiqar Khan was the most prominent amongst the nobles who dominated the political arena, and his services to the empire were too patent to be ignored. His soldierly qualities and skilful statesmanship were very well known to those of Aurangzib's generation, and most of them were still alive. It was a matter of common knowledge that the late emperor had super-

7 Iradat Khan, 41a-41b.

8 Qasim, 38a.

9 Iradat Khan, 46a. Kamraj bin Nain Sukh, *Ibrat Nāma*, 45b.

seduced his father Asad Khan, mainly because of the solemn promise he had made to Munim Khan on the eve of his struggle with his brothers Azam and Kam Bakhsh, and not because of any superiority of talent. Thus the past and the present combined to enable Zulfiqar Khan to play a crucial role for a few years.

PLANS FOR PARTITION OF EMPIRE

The Amīr-ul-umārā's sympathies inclined towards Jahandar Shah, partly because he was the eldest of the sons of the late emperor, but mainly because he could see that it would be easier to hold him under his thumb. He was, however, shrewd enough not to lay his cards on the table all at once. To create an impression of impartiality he started with the plan of compromise.¹⁰ But his opponents could see through the game, and some of them even advised Jahan Shah to arrest him. But he did not dare do it. So the arch intriguer succeeded in enunciating a formula for *rapprochement*. He offered the following suggestion: "The Deccan should fall to Jahan Shah; Multan, Thattah and Kashmir to Rafi-us-shan; and Azim-us-shan and Jahandar Shah should divide the remaining subahs of Hindustan between them."¹¹ The scheme was too palpably insincere to hoodwink anybody. Its purpose was to send away Jahan Shah to the distant Deccan, to deprive Azim-us-shan of his moorings in Bengal and Bihar, to remove Rafi-us-shan to Multan and to drive a wedge between the province under his immediate charge and his distant possession (Kashmir), and finally, to precipitate a struggle between Jahandar Shah and Azim-us-shan.¹² No wonder the plan fell through.

Zulfiqar's next step was to unite Jahandar Shah, Jahan Shah and Rafi-us-shan against Azim-us-shan whose resources, both in men and money, were far superior to those of any of the three, perhaps even to those of the three combined. Jahan Shah's powder and rockets had already exploded, and on account of his financial bankruptcy Jahandar Shah had no following worth the name. Jahan Shah and Rafi-us-shan were taken in by the apparent advantages of the modified scheme of the partition of the empire. It envisaged that Jahandar Shah, being the eldest, should be acknowledged as the emperor: the *khutbah* and *sikkah* were to be in his name. Kashmir, Kabul, Multan, Thattah and Bhakkar should go to the share of Rafi-us-shan. The Deccan south of

¹⁰ Nur-ul-din, 10a. Iradat Khan, 15b-47b. Kamwar Khan, *Tarikh-i-Salatin-i-Chaghta*, 333b.

¹¹ *Farrukh Nama*, 14b-15a. Yahya Khan, *Tazkirat-ul-Muluk*, 117b. Kamraj, 45a. Kamwar Khan, 333ab.

¹² Qasim, 37b. Khafi Khan, 685. Irvine, *Later Mughals*, I, 161.

the Narmada should be ruled by Jahan Shah. To retain the formal integrity of the imperial possessions, it was further stipulated that Zulfiqar Khan was to be the prime minister stationed in Delhi, and that he should be represented in other parts of the empire by his deputies.¹³

WAR OF SUCCESSION

Thus was set the field for the last fratricidal struggle in the history of the Mughal empire. Evidently the modified plan for partition was not the result of any voluntary compromise on the part of the federating allies; it was foisted upon them by a schemer of superior intellect and ability. Its real object was to sow, under the pretence of maintaining unity, the seeds of discord and to destroy the allies one by one. According to tradition, the sword was the final arbiter in a contest for the throne; but at the moment, with the exception of Azim-us-shan, none of the brothers was in a position to draw it, even with any dim prospect of success. Thus inadvertently the initiative slipped from the hands of the princely competitors into those of the nobles, and particularly their leader, Zulfiqar Khan.

Compared to the earlier wars of succession which were fought for winning the crown, the one which occurred among the sons of Bahadur Shah was a despicable mockery. It was a mimic show, the movement of strings being entirely controlled by Zulfiqar Khan. On 14 March 1712 the three brothers arrived close to the entrenchment of Azim-us-shan and besieged it from three sides.¹⁴ After a few days of desultory fighting with occasional exchange of musket fire, the allies delivered a joint attack on 16th March, but the result proved to be indecisive. Next day they made up their mind to press the contest to a final issue. "The sound of battle ran high on every side, and the fight was begun." Azim-us-shan's defences were pierced from every side, and he was hemmed in by his enemies. While the battle was still furiously raging, Azim-us-shan disappeared from the field. His followers dispersed and his treasures were plundered in the twinkling of an eye. "The three princes caused the drums of victory to be beaten, and then they returned to their own dwellings."¹⁵

¹³ *Farrukh Nâma*, 9a-17a. *Jahândâr Nâma*, 11b-12a. Yahya Khan, 117b. *Mâasir-ul-umarâ* (text), Bib. Indica, II, 99. *Mirâz-i-Wâridât*, 195-212.

¹⁴ Kamraj, 48a. Nur-ud-din, 15b. *Farrukh Nâma* 50a. According to Qasim (39a) the incidents took place on 17 March, while Khafi Khan (686) places them ten days later (27 March).

¹⁵ According to Nur-ud-din, Azim-us-shan found himself unequal to the artillery attack and slipped away from the battlefield. Qasim says that he died fighting. So

The allies, particularly Jahan Shah and Rafi-us-shan, became greedily anxious for the speedy division of the spoils; but Zulfiqar prevaricated and delayed.¹⁶ Thereupon the two princes began to recruit men for a fresh trial of strength. There was none to tender to them sane advice and unite them against the common foe. Perhaps concerted action on their part would have upset Zulfiqar's plans but he managed to keep the one brother estranged from the other. Therefore Jahan Shah opened the fray all alone. So impetuous was his charge, that he bore it all before him, and succeeded in parting Jahandar Shah from his favourite mistress Lal Kunwar, and in compelling him to seek refuge among some stacks of bricks. But hardly had the sound of the drums of victory drowned, than his soldiers dispersed in all directions hunting for him. In fact, Jahan Shah and his son Farkhundah Akhtar had been killed by a cannon ball. The elephant bearing their corpses was seized by Zulfiqar's men. Khujista Akhtar and one of his younger brothers were brought prisoners to Jahandar Shah, who then proclaimed his victory.¹⁷

Now remained Rafi-us-shan who was by no means a formidable rival. He was thrown off his guard and became complacent. When, however, he sent a messenger to his elder brother to define his attitude and clarify the negotiations which he had been carrying on so long, he was shocked at the perfidy of the latter. But the prospects of mischief on his part were cut short, when Jahandar Shah surreptitiously sent a detachment of horse by night. Rafi-us-shan fought desperately, but was killed along with two of his sons. Three others—Muhammad Ibrahim, Rafi-ud-daulah and Rafi-ud-darjat—though wounded, remained alive.

Thus came to a close the first act in the tragic history of the later Mughals; others more gruesome were yet to follow. Undoubtedly the nobles were responsible for these frequent blood-baths. Princes could restrain their political greed, but the lust of nobles was insatiable.

says Kamwar Khan. But Mubammad Qasim Aurangabadi and Iradat Khan say that he was wounded and taken by Raja Raj Singh to his country where he died.

See *Farrukh Nâma*, 51b, 53b; *Jahândâr Nâma*, 24ab; *Ahwâl-ul-Khawâqîn*, 42ah, 43a; Iradat Khan, 49ab; Kamwar, 334a; Qasim, 40b; Nur-ud-din, 24b-26b; Khafi Khan, 687; Yahya, 118a.

¹⁶ Aurangabadi says that it was Jahandar Shah who adopted an evasive attitude towards the distribution of the booty.

¹⁷ Iradat Khan, 51a-52b, 53b. Yahya, 118b. Kamwar, 334b, 335a. Qasim, 41ab, 42a. Nur-ud-din, 27ab, 29b. Khafi Khan, 687. *Farrukh Nâma*, 58b, 62b, 63a. Kamraj, 46a. *Jahândâr Nâma*, 28ab.

REIGN OF JAHANDAR SHAH (1712-13)

The struggle being over Jahandar Shah, the most unworthy among the sons of Bahadur Shah, celebrated his accession at Lahore on 29 March 1712.¹⁸ According to the time-honoured custom he reconstituted his ministry. Zulfiqar Khan obtained the coveted post of wazir and the rank of 8,000. His father Asad Khan continued to enjoy the honorific title of Vakil-i-mutlaq. Among other appointments, mention should be made of Khan Jahan Ali Murad Kukultash Khan as the first bakhshi with the title of Amīr-ul-umārā, and of Khwajah Husain Khan Dauran as the second bakhshi. The two were related to each other very closely; and as the former enjoyed the confidence of the new emperor, they in collaboration with Azam Khan, the new governor of Agra, formed a solid bloc of opposition to the prime minister. Another noteworthy appointment was that of Sabha Chand who was honoured with the title of raja and made diwan-i-khālsa. He was the right hand man of Zulfiqar Khan.

The talent, in fact the lack of it, as also the fickle temperament of the new sovereign did not promise a successful reign. Though in his fifty-second year, Jahandar Shah in his behaviour displayed the frivolity and sprightliness of a stripling of eighteen. His morals were degenerate and his tastes highly depraved. He drank heavily and passed most of his time in the snug society of his mistress Lal Kunwar, a courtesan whose relatives and adherents now received privileged treatment in state employment. Music and dancing were the main pastimes of the monarch; jesters and buffoons were his boon associates.¹⁹ He had hardly any interest in state affairs, nor was he competent to take any. His orgies made him an object of disgust and scorn to the nobility and public alike.

Nor did the prime minister Zulfiqar Khan give a better account of himself. Perhaps he had been overtaken with senile decay. Otherwise it is inexplicable that with so rich and varied experience and so brilliant past, he, after attaining the object of his desire, should have behaved so miserably and failed to use his own initiative and intelligence. According to Iradat Khan, 'he studied to ruin the most ancient families, inventing pretences to put great men to death, or disgrace them that he might plunder their possessions... He established such abuses and exactions as no prior age had beheld. He took enormous emoluments and revenues for himself, while he disposed of money to

¹⁸ Kamwar (336b) says that Jahandar Shah ascended the throne on 26 March. Nur-ul-din's date (34b) is 22 March.

¹⁹ *Ahu al-Khalq*, 46ab. *Farrukh Nāma*, 74ab. Yahya, 119b. Kamwar, 337a. Kamraj, 47a.

others with a hand so sparing that even his own creatures felt severe poverty with empty titles, for he never allowed jagirs to any."²⁰ He devolved his entire administrative authority upon his favourite Sabha Chand, who was called the diwan and manager and 'who used such filthy, obscene language that the breath of his foul mouth threw decent men into agony and disgust'.²¹ For this careless dereliction of duty the prime minister had to pay with his life. He lost all influence which he had built up; nobody had faith in his promise, and like his master he too was bitterly hated.

The machinations of Khan Jahan Kukultash Khan added further to the piquancy of the situation. Being the foster-brother of the emperor he obtained undue influence over his mind. His wife, daughter and the whole family importuned him to redeem his promise of making Khan Jahan prime minister; they combined to work for the overthrow of Zulfiqar Khan. Their relations and dependants were raised to high rank, and a large section of the nobility, distressed by the pride and rapacity of the wazir, joined their party. They insinuated to the emperor that Zulfiqar had determined on a revolution with the object of seizing the throne for himself, or bestowing it upon one of the confined princes more amenable to his will than the emperor. Such intrigues could not long remain secret, and they created deep mistrust between Jahandar Shah and his benefactor.

From Lahore Jahandar Shah came to Delhi where he arrived on 22 June 1712. While on the way, the rumour of Farrukh-siyar's arrival at Patna and of his intention to contest the throne was reported to the emperor. At first he treated it with contempt, but on second thought he ordered his eldest son Azz-ud-din to march to Agra and watch the course of events. He was to be assisted by two advisers, Khwajah Husain Khan Dauran²² and Lutfullah Khan Sadiq.²³ But neither of them had the competence to deal with the situation at such a critical juncture.

In fact, these appointments were made against the wishes of the prime minister who was fully aware of the evil disposition of Khwajah Husain as also of the imbecility and incapacity of the prince.

²⁰ Iraqlat Khan, 57a.

²¹ Khafi Khan, 691. *Risala*, 70b.

²² He held a mansab of 5,000 and exercised great influence over Jahandar Shah. He commanded the army sent under prince Azz-ud-din to fight against Farrukh-siyar (Kamraj), 47a. Khafi Khan, 697.

²³ As Ansari shaikhzada of Panipat, he joined the imperial court in Bahadur Shah's reign as a petty mansabdar. Censured in Jahandar Shah's reign, he joined Farrukh-siyar's party and became the diwan of the khalsa after the latter's victory. In Muhammad Shah's reign he was made khân-i-sâmân with the rank of 8,000 (*Muâsir-ul-umar* III, 117-78).

In arriving at these decisions the emperor was influenced by Khan Jahan and Lal Kunwar who had pitted themselves against the wazir.²⁴ They persuaded the emperor into believing that the latter was in league with Farrukh-siyar 'to whom he would deliver His Majesty a prisoner'. No wonder, therefore, that Zulfiqar's sincere suggestion, that the emperor should waste no time in Delhi, but march straight to Agra, and if necessary further east, was rejected as inspired by treachery. This is the first instance of the tussle between the prime minister, on the one hand, and the emperor's favourites, on the other.

FATE OF JAHANDAR SHAH

While Jahandar Shah was grovelling in lustful sloth and revelries in Delhi, and his favourite Lal Kunwar was estranging him from his kith and kin, the political storm was gradually mounting up in fury in the east. Farrukh-siyar, the second son of the late Azim-us-shan, had left Bengal, his services having been requisitioned by his father in anticipation of the war of succession which was staring him in the face. On his way to court, when he was halting at Patna, he heard of the death of his grandfather Bahadur Shah. He recited the *khutbah* and struck coins in the name of his father. But soon he was stunned by the report of the tragedy which had befallen his father at Lahore. He was at his wit's end. He had neither men nor money, nor had he friends among the leading members of the nobility. Two of his father's supporters, Khan Jahan and Sarbuland Khan, had already shown cold shoulder to him and had deserted to Jahandar Shah. The *de facto* subahdar of Bengal (though as yet he was only diwan), Murshid Quli Khan, was not prepared to raise his little finger on his behalf. Nor were Ali Asghar Khan, the faujdar of Etawah, and Chhabila Ram Nagar, the faujdar of Kara-Manikpur, eager to take up his none too hopeful cause.²⁵

Nevertheless, fortune began to smile upon him. On the insistence of his mother, Farrukh-siyar carried out his own enthronement at Patna. The resourceful lady succeeded in persuading Sayyid Husain Ali Khan to espouse the cause of her son.²⁶ The Sayyid was a protege of her deceased husband at whose instance he and his elder brother Abdullah had been appointed governor of Bihar and Allahabad

²⁴ Iradat Khan, 62a. Khafi Khan, 690.

²⁵ Both of them later joined Farrukh-siyar and fought against Jahandar Shah. (Kumraj, 50ab. Nur-ud-din, 45a-46b. Khafi Khan, 729).

Chhabila Ram Nagar belonged to a Gujarati Brahmin family. He served for many years in the revenue department under Azim-us-shan.

²⁶ According to *Risâls* (64a) it was Khan Dauran who persuaded the Sayyid brothers to support Farrukh-siyar.

respectively. Abdullah was at first disposed to submit to Jahandar Shah; but when he found that he had been superseded by a rival, he changed his mind, and fell in with the proposal of his younger brother. In agreeing to assist Farrukh-siyar neither of the two brothers was inspired by any high ideal of gratitude to his father, their benefactor. They were lured by the prospects of the highest honours and rewards. But they were not ordinary adventurers or common upstarts. They claimed descent from the famous Barha branch of the Sayyids. Their father had held in Aurangzib's reign the governorships of Bijapur and Ajmer, appointments given in that reign either to princes of the blood or to the very foremost men in the state.

The support of the Sayyid brothers turned the situation in Farrukh-siyar's favour; the number of his adherents began to grow. Ahmad Beg (afterwards Ghazi-ud-din Khan Ghalib Jang), Raja Siddhist Narayan of Shahabad, Khwaja Asim (Ashraf Khan), Saf Shikan Khan, Mir Mushrif, Zain-ud-din Khan, a Ruhela Pathan, declared themselves for the rising star. Buoyed up by this unexpected accession of strength, Farrukh-siyar left Patna and arrived at Allahabad. Here at Jhusi Sayyid Abdullah was received in audience and the formal agreement promising the post of wazir to the elder brother and that of mir bakhshi to the younger brother was drawn up and signed. Shortly after, Chhabila Ram Nagar arrived with a welcome supply of money, relieving the wants of the army which was literally starving.²⁷

Farrukh-siyar left Allahabad and marched towards the west. On the way he was joined by Muhammad Khan Bangash with 4,000 or 5,000 Afghan horsemen. Meanwhile prince Azz-ud-din and his counsellors had entrenched themselves near Khajwa. When the Sayyid brothers approached the place with their forces Khan Dauran and Lutfullah Khan were much perplexed; they decided to seek safety in flight. When they broached the suggestion with the prince, he flatly refused to accept it. In the end, Khan Dauran forged a letter purporting to have been written by Lal Kunwar intimating the prince of the death of his father and asking him to expedite his return if he coveted the crown. The trick proved but too effective. On 28 November 1712 the prince with his wife and attendants fled at the dead of night to Agra.²⁸ Next morning his camp was plundered by Farrukh-siyar's soldiers. At Khajwa more deserters from the camp of Jahandar Shah came over to the winning side.

27 Qasim, 48a. Khafi Khan, 698. *Risala*, 65a. Nur ud-din, 45b-46a.

28 Qasim, 50ab. *Farrukh Nâma*, 87ab, 89b. Yahya, 120b-121a. Nur-ud din, 47b, 48a. Khafi Khan, 699. Kamwar, 337a. *Risala*, 65b. Iradat Khan, 64a.

The report of Azz-ud-din's flight from Khajwa created extreme panic in Delhi. Frantic efforts were made to recruit a fresh army. Gold and silver vessels were broken to pay the soldiery; and hurriedly an indisciplined rabble was assembled together. Jahandar Shah left Delhi on 9 December 1712 and after twenty days' march arrived at Agra. As if to seal his doom, some of his supporters began to meditate treachery. Shariatullah Khan won over Chin Qilich Khan and Muhammad Amin Khan and persuaded them to refrain from fighting on the day of battle.²⁹ Shortly after, Sayyid Abdullah crossed the Jamuna. For two days Jahandar Shah refused to take the initiative. When at last the battle did ensue (10 January 1713), Farrukh-siyar and the Sayyid brothers were pressed hard. Husain Ali was severely wounded, but Abdullah did not lose courage. Zulfiqar too rose equal to the occasion and exerted himself strenuously; but upon the disappearance of Jahandar Shah from the field, his heart gave way. He marched towards Delhi, spurning aside the overtures of Farrukh-siyar.³⁰

Jahandar and his mistress travelled post haste from Agra in a bullock cart and arrived at Delhi on 15 January 1713. The emperor went straight to the house of the old statesman Asad Khan who disapproved the plan for continuing the struggle. Although Zulfiqar Khan wanted to pursue a different course, he had to bow to the wishes of his father. They put Jahandar Shah under arrest, and wrote to Farrukh-siyar tendering their submission and requesting suitable recognition of the signal service they had done to him. The *khutbah* was read in the name of Farrukh-siyar in the Juma Masjid of Delhi on 19 January 1713.

The story of the tragic fate of the aged Asad Khan and his over-ambitious son Zulfiqar Khan may now briefly be narrated. They fell victims to the party rivalry in the entourage of Farrukh-siyar. Zulfiqar, in the first instance, approached Abdullah who promised a fair and generous deal to him and his father. Upon this the opposite party led by Shariatullah Khan began to play their own game. They sent Muhammad Jafar Taqarrub Khan as their emissary to Asad Khan to persuade him to approach the new emperor through them, rather than through the Sayyid brothers, with whom Farrukh-siyar was already displeased. Adequate assurance for the protection of their lives having been given, the father and son were escorted to Khizrahad where the emperor was encamping. Asad Khan was the first to be

29 Khafi Khan, 700. *Risala*, 61ab. Nur-ud-din, 50b. Kamraj, 51a. Qasim, 52ab.

30 Nur-ud-din, 53b, 57a 58b, 59ab. Khafi Khan, 702-4. Qasim, 54, 55a. *Farrukh Nama*, 69a, 97a. Kamwar, 338b. *Risala*, 70a. Yahya, 121b. Iradat Khan, 68a. Kamraj, 52a.

introduced into the audience and he was graciously received. But Zulfiqar was treacherously arrested and put to death on the charge of high treason (11 February 1713). Asad Khan dragged on his miserable existence for three years more and died in 1716.³¹

Jahandar Shah, who had taken shelter in the house of Asad Khan, had to be sent a prisoner to the fort, to appease the clamours of the partisans of Farrukh-siyar in Delhi. Lal Kunwar was allowed to join him. After his arrival at the capital Abdullah made the imprisonment of the ex-emperor severer still; by his orders fetters were put on his feet. On 11 February 1713 the unhappy wretch was forcibly dragged away from the arms of Lal Kunwar and strangled to death. His head was cut off and sent to the new emperor. Nor was quarter given to the prominent members of the defeated party. Sadullah Khan, an ex-prime minister, Hidayat Kesh Khan, the chief news-writer, Sidi Qasim, the kotwal, and even the saint Shah Qudratullah of Allahabad were denounced as traitors and sent to the gallows. The tongue of the unpopular diwan Sabha Chand was cut off, but strangely enough he continued to talk.

REIGN OF FARRUKH-SIYAR (1713-19)

Thus commenced the unhappy reign of Farrukh-siyar, one of the most unlucky sovereigns of the Chaghtai house. His six years of regal authority (January 1713—February 1719) were marked by violent clash of ambitions amongst individuals and groups alike. In the orgy of intrigue and dissimulation the emperor played the most disgusting role; his imbecility and indecision³² in the end hurled him into the abyss of disgrace and destruction. The only saving trait in his character was his wanton extravagance which made him popular among the lower strata of society. He was fond of gaudy dress and of horses. He had almost a craze for hunting, and was an adept in archery, wrestling, polo, and other soldierly exercises. But he was unfit to be a sovereign. Fate dragged him to the throne and then dragged him down from it.

The history of the reign is marked by three military campaigns undertaken to suppress the spirit of defiance which was in evidence in various parts of north India: Rajputana, the Punjab and the land of the Jats. Bahadur Shah's activities in Rajputana had proved abortive. During the confusion following his death Ajit Singh of Marwar had reasserted his independence. Jahandar Shah had neither the

³¹ Khafi Khan, 732-733. Yahya, 122a. Kamwar, 340b. Qasim, 57b. *Farrukh Nâma*, 103a, 104b. Iradat Khan, 89b. Kamraj, 53ab.

³² Khafi Khan, 794. Qasim, 68b.

capacity nor the time to deal with him. But Farrukh-siyar soon after his accession turned his attention to the crisis. An expedition was sent under Sayyid Husain Ali and Ajit Singh was compelled to submit to the imperial authority. The Sikhs were also suppressed. Their leader Banda was captured and put to death.

The Jats had proved themselves to be a source of much trouble and unrest since the reign of Aurangzib. Their leader Churaman submitted to Bahadur Shah; but after the latter's death the Jat chief profited at the cost of the contestants in the war of succession. Farrukh-siyar after his accession commissioned Chhabila Ram Nagar, the governor of Agra, to suppress the Jats, but his exertions proved abortive. Then his successor Samsam-ud-daulah Khan Dauran attempted conciliation and persuaded Churaman to tender his submission. The Jat leader was placed in charge of the road between Delhi and the Chambal. But under the cover of royal protection, and with the connivance of the wazir Qutb-ul-mulk Abdullah, he began to act in a manner prejudicial to the interests of the state and the people alike. He levied unauthorised road-tolls, terrorised the jagirdars, and constructed for himself a stronghold at Thun.

At length, in September 1716, Sawai Jai Singh who had been recalled from Malwa was ordered to deal with the situation. He was to be assisted by three other Rajput chiefs, Raja Bhim Singh of Kotah, Raja Budh Singh of Bundi, and Raja Gaj Singh of Narwar. Later on Sayyid Muzaffar Khan, Khan Jahan, was sent to act in concert with them. But partly because of the inefficiency of the commander-in-chief, and mainly because of the sabotaging of his plans by Qutb-ul-mulk from Delhi and by Khan Jahan in the field, it proved impossible for Sawai Jai Singh to obtain any decisive result. Though Thun was closely invested, the roads could not be cleared of robbers. At last Churaman sent proposals for peace to Qutb-ul-mulk, which Farrukh-siyar had to accept. The Jat leader and his nephew Rupa were introduced into the royal audience on 19 April 1718.³³

In two out of the three military campaigns referred to above, the story of underhand dealings is very patent. During the Rajput campaign the favourites of Farrukh-siyar worked hard to bring about the discomfiture of the Amir-ul-umara Sayyid Husain Ali. Secret letters were sent to Ajit Singh to put up as stiff a resistance as was possible, in return for which distinctions and honours were promised to him. According to one authority these letters were handed over by Ajit Singh to his daughter when he sent her to be married to the emperor. They found their way into the hands of the wazir and formed one

³³ Kamwar, 352-356b. Shiv Das, 11b, 12a-18b. Khafi Khan, 777.

of the causes of misunderstanding between him and his master. As if to retaliate upon the court favourites for their past misconduct, the wazir in his turn encouraged the resistance of Churaman, to spell defeat and disgrace upon Sawai Jai Singh who stood high in the estimation of Farrukh-sivar.³⁴ In either case the result was the same, viz. the undermining of the imperial authority and prestige.

A similar trick was resorted to on another occasion. When Sayyid Husain Ali had been appointed governor of the Deccan and was proceeding to take over charge, a subordinate officer, Daud Khan Panni, was secretly asked to resist the viceroy-designate. He died fighting against Husain Ali, and the note written in the hand of Samsam-ud-daulah Khan Dauran fell into the hands of the victor. When Qutb-ul-mulk faced the intriguer with his handiwork, he hung down his head in shame, and pleaded in his defence his obedience to the orders of the emperor.³⁵

- In this way group intrigues formed an important aspect of court life during the reign of Farrukh-sivar. Parties are a normal feature in any system of government and the period of Mughal rule could be no exception. But from the days of Babur to those of Bahadur Shah, ordinarily, the sovereign towered high above court cliques and kept them under control. After the latter's death, however, the position was reversed. Jahandar Shah was able to seize the crown because Zulfiqar Khan had thrown his weight in his favour. Farrukh-sivar gained the throne because of the support of the Sayyid brothers and their satellites. Naturally the king-makers wanted to lord it over the puppets of their making.

The disagreement between Farrukh-sivar and his influential and nagging favourites on the one hand and the ambitious wazir on the other gave rise to a piquant situation. Sayyid Abdullah was offended at what he thought to be the ingratitude of Farrukh-sivar, and spared no efforts to undermine the latter's authority. On the other hand, the emperor was egged on by his favourites to assert himself. The tussle between the two produced a rich crop of intrigues and counter-intrigues. Besides, when the allegiance of individuals was open to the highest bid, political developments could not be steady. Opportunists thrived in multitudinous numbers, and their greed and selfishness rendered confusion worse confounded. Cliques were formed and

³⁴ Khafi Khan, 738 777. *Ahwāl*, 69b-70a, 73ab, 88-92b. Kamwar, 356ab. Irvine, *Later Mughals*, I, 292.

³⁵ Qasim, 71b, 72ab. *Ahdūl*, 108, 109b-112a, 120b, 121ab. Yahya, 124a. Kamraj, 57b. Khafi Khan, 742, 753-54.

dissolved like quicksand. In the race of conflicting ambitions, the interests of the empire were cast to the winds.³⁶

That the parties did not conform to any sound principle requires little proof. Nor was the division among them based upon the distinction of nationality or religion. After the exit of Zulfiqar Khan from the political arena the Iranis had receded into the background. But this did not induce the Turanis like Muhammad Amin Khan, Nizam-ul-mulk and Sarbuland Khan to coalesce. As to the inner circle, the members of which are presumed to have influenced the changing moods of Farrukh-siyar, its composition did not remain the same, nor were its members consistent in their loyalty to the emperor. At first Mir Jumla was the conscience-keeper of the emperor, but later on he turned to the wazir Qutb-ul-mulk for favour. Samsam-ud-daulah Khan Dauran could not choose between his royal master and the powerful minister. Muhammad Murad Kashmiri, Itiqad Khan, proved to be a broken reed. Only Sawai Jai Singh remained steady in his fidelity.

SAYYID BROTHERS VERSUS FARRUKH-SIYAR

The relations between the Sayyid brothers and Farrukh-siyar were strained from the very beginning. The emperor wanted to appoint Ghazi-ud-din Khan Ghalib Jang as wazir, and to nominate Abdullah to the vacant post of Vakil-i-mutlaq. But the elder Sayyid expressed his resentment against the proposed arrangement and compelled the emperor to rescind it. Abdullah secured the wizarat for himself and began to interfere with the emperor's discretion of nominating persons of his own choice to government offices. For example, when Farrukh-siyar appointed Chhabila Ram Nagar as diwan-i-khalsa, and Afzal Khan sadr-i-sudur, Abdullah was very much dissatisfied; he actually compelled the emperor to revise his decision. The distribution of the confiscated property of the favourites of the ex-emperor Jahandar Shah formed another cause of quarrel between the new sovereign and his prime minister.

Left to themselves, the chances of accommodation between Farrukh-siyar and the Sayyid brothers would not have been remote. But on both sides there were active partisans whose main interest lay in keeping aflame the fire of discord. Mir Jumla, Khan Dauran and Itiqad Khan formed a clique which gained complete control over the mind of the emperor and aggravated the misunderstanding between the latter and his prime minister, Sayyid Abdullah.³⁷ Nor

³⁶ Qasim, 72ab. Ahwāl, 77b-79b. Shiv Das, 17b-18a. Khafi Khan, 770.

³⁷ Ahwāl, 69b-70a 88a-95b. Kamraj, 63b-64b. Khafi Khan, 729-30.

should the elder Sayyid be considered free from blame for the situation as it developed in the long run. His administrative ability being next to nil, he delegated his powers, like his predecessor Zulfiqar, to his diwan Ratan Chand 'who, having been raised to a position above his capacity, laboured hard to annoy the people'.³⁸ Naturally when the wazir was incompetent and the sovereign weak-willed, it was impossible for them to pull on well together.

For some time, however, the quarrel between the Sayyids and the emperor was made up by the removal of Mir Jumla to Patna, the disgrace of Lutfullah Khan Sadiq, and the appointment of Sayyid Husain Ali to the viceroyalty of the six subahs of the Deccan. But it revived upon the return of Mir Jumla from Patna and of Nizam-ul-mulk from the Deccan. It became deadly when the emperor, much against the wishes of the wazir, appointed Inayetullah Kashmiri as diwan-i-khalsa, and when the latter attempted to remove the abuses which had crept into the system of revenue administration on account of the carelessness of Sayyid Abdullah and the extortions of his factotum, Ratan Chand. The breach was further widened by the appointment of Muhammad Murad Kashmiri, first as dārogha-i-harkārān and then as mīr tuzuk. The Jat campaign had exposed the surreptitious ways of the wazir and Sawai Jai Singh fanned the fire of the emperor's resentment still further.³⁹

Henceforward commenced the frantic quest for a substitute of the wazir, and also the attempts to inveigle the elder Sayyid into a trap. Farrukh-siyar might have succeeded in his plan, but his indecision and waywardness estranged from him even those who were sincerely desirous of helping him. At first Sarbuland Khan, 'well known for his valour and wisdom', was summoned to the court where he arrived on 8 July 1718. He was promoted to the rank of 7,000+6,000 with the title of Mubariz-ul-mulk Nawaz Jang. He was prevailed upon to pit himself against the wazir. But when the emperor, on being questioned as to how he would fill up the vacancy after the fall of Abdullah, indicated his preference for Itiqad Khan, Sarbuland's ardour cooled down. He did not want to be used as a 'tool for the aggrandisement of others'.⁴⁰

Nor could Nizam-ul-mulk be persuaded to draw chest-nuts out of fire for others. He was sent for from Moradabad where he was acting

³⁸ Khafi Khan, 739. Ratan Chand was a Baniya by caste, an inhabitant of the district of Muzaffarnagar in Uttar Pradesh, and an old associate of the Sayyid brothers.

³⁹ Khafi Khan, 742, 774-77. Ahvāl, 92b, 108a. Kamrai, 57b, 63b, 64a. Kamwar, 350, 353b. Maāsir-ul-umarā, I, 350-352. Irvine, *Later Mughals*, I, 338.

⁴⁰ Khafi Khan, 792. Shiv Das, 19a-20a.

as faujdar, engaged in chastising rebels and in restoring peace and security in that region. He was received with great honour and was promised the chief ministership of the realm. But he was disgusted with the levity of the emperor and his favourites. When he refused to play the second fiddle to Itiqad Khan, his jagirs were confiscated and then bestowed upon the latter.⁴¹ He was now completely alienated from the emperor; but he refrained from taking sides. He made up his mind to wait and see.

FALL OF FARRUKH-SIYAR

When the secret of the emperor's unsuccessful parleys with Sarbuland Khan and Nizam-ul-mulk leaked out, Qutb-ul-mulk seized the opportunity and gained the upper hand. He successfully weaned away from the side of the emperor his adherents one by one. Nizam-ul-mulk was tempted with the viceroyalty of Malwa which had been vacated by Itimad-ul-daulah Muhammad Amin. Sarbuland Khan became the recipient of a large measure of sympathy from the wazir who promised him the governorship of Kabul. When Muhammad Amin Khan saw through the game of Itiqad Khan, he also cast his lot with the Sayyids.⁴² Even the father-in-law of the emperor, Ajit Singh of Marwar, who had for long been their favourite, refused to side with him.

Abdullah sent express messages to his brother in the Deccan, asking him to return post haste to the head-quarters. But Husain Ali was already in the midst of a tangled political skein. He had defeated Daud Khan Panni, but the Marathas were not allowing him a moment's rest. In view of the crisis which was fast developing in Delhi he was unable to continue the struggle against them. He decided to buy off the Marathas and concluded an agreement with Peshwa Balaji Vishwanath.⁴³ Then he hurried towards north India.

In February 1719 Husain Ali arrived at the capital with a large army, consisting of ten to twelve thousand Marathas under the command of Balaji Vishwanath and Khande Rao Dabhade. Deserted alike by his friends and advisers, and even by his father-in-law Ajit Singh, Farrukh-siyar was driven to a tight corner.⁴⁴ On 28 February 1719

41 Khafi Khan, 792, 802 Shiv Das, 19a *Iqbāl Nāma*, 47, 97.

42 Khafi Khan, 802 Shiv Das, 23a. Ahwūl, 146a, 152b-153a Kamwar, 36b Kamraj 69b.

43 Ahwūl, 129ab. Qasim, 73b Yahva, 124ab. Kamwar, 358a. *Iqbāl Nāma*, 41 45, 49-50. Kamraj, 60a-61b, 65a. Khafi Khan, 786. *Ma'āsir-ul-umrā*, I, 329 30.

44 Shiv Das (23b-24b) says that the only supporter of the emperor, Sawai Jai Singh, was removed from the capital by the Sayyid brothers on the pretext of a possible clash with the Marathas.

he was overpowered, arrested, and thrown into prison. He was subjected to all sorts of tortures by his gaolers. He was supplied with bitter and oversalted dishes. Slow poison was then tried on him for some time. But he survived all these base experiments. At last executioners were sent to strangle him to death. The event occurred on the night between 27 and 28 April 1719. This was the first instance of a sovereign of the Mughal dynasty losing his life by the order of a noble. Nemesis soon overtook the perpetrators of the abominable crime.

SAYYIDS AS KING-MAKERS

In pursuit of their selfish ambition the Sayyid brothers paid scant heed to the larger interests of the empire. Though the younger Sayyid was gifted with some amount of soldierly skill, neither of them was a politician. The responsibility of pointing to the Marathas the way across the Narmada and exposing to them the weakness of the imperial structure may unhesitatingly be fixed upon Husain Ali. He purchased their assistance at a heavy price; and the consequent complications could not be liquidated in later years. In fact, the concessions which were allowed by Husain Ali to Balaji Vishwanath radically changed the constitutional status of the Maratha king Shahu in relation to the Mughal emperor. Few, however, at the moment paused to give serious thought to it.

In the madness of their pride, the Sayyid brothers after deposing Farrukh-siyar elevated Rafi-ud-darjat to the throne. According to the customary practice, numerous changes were made in the ministry at the head-quarters as also among the officers in the provinces. Muhammad Amin Khan was appointed as the second bakhshi; Zafar Khan Rushan-ud-daulah as the third bakhshi; Muhammad Raza as the chief qazi; Mir Khan Alamgiri as sadr-i-sudūr; Diyanat Khan Khawafi as diwan-i-khālsa; and Raja Bakht Mal as diwan-i-tan. Sarbuland Khan was confirmed as the governor of Kabul. Nizam-ul-mulk was, however, a problem. At first he was posted to Patna, but this decision was soon changed. Those bearing allegiance to the ex-emperor were dismissed or imprisoned and their jagirs were confiscated. Among them mention should be made of Itiqad Khan, the conscience-keeper of Farrukh-siyar; Saadat Khan, the father-in-law of the latter, and Shayistah Khan, the maternal uncle. Sayvid Salabat, the chief of artillery; and Afzal Khan, the sadr. After this the Marathas were permitted to return to the Deccan. They carried with them the firman containing the grant of concessions which they had demanded.

In spite of their having gathered all power into their hands the king-makers found themselves in a hornet's nest. Their cruelty to

Farrukh-siyar was resented by the people of Delhi, and their ally Ajit Singh was subjected to contemptuous ridicule. Add to this the outbreak of trouble at Agra, where a rival party set up Nikusiyar as emperor.⁴⁵ Moreover, misunderstanding arose between the two brothers on the division of spoils and also on matters of policy. When Nikusiyar made overtures for peace they were unable to come to an agreed decision. Qutb-ul-mulk favoured acceptance, whereas Husain Ali was opposed to it. "By his kindness and generosity the latter had drawn to himself most of the brave and able nobles, and he was getting into his hands control over all government of the country." This proved to be another cause of jealousy between the two brothers.

The new emperor's state of health began to deteriorate rapidly. On his suggestion the Sayyids raised to the throne his older brother Rafi-ud-daulah on 6 June 1719. The freedom of the new monarch was even more restricted than that of his predecessor. He was virtually a prisoner in charge of Himmat Khan Barha, the guardian-tutor. He was not permitted to attend the public prayers on Friday, to go out hunting, or even to converse with any noble, except in the presence of his custodians. He soon fell ill and died in September 1719.

During the brief span of his rule Agra was recovered from the hands of insurgents, and Nikusiyar was sent to Delhi to be imprisoned in the fort of Salimgarh along with other princes. The Rajput widow of Farrukh-siyar was handed over to her father Ajit Singh who reconverted her to Hinduism.⁴⁶ The quarrel between the Sayyid brothers was made up for the time being through the exertions of Ratan Chand.

To prevent untoward incidents, the death of Rafi-ud-daulah was kept secret till the arrival of the Sayyids' new nominee, prince Rushan Akhtar, son of the late Jahan Shah. The accession of the new sovereign was proclaimed on 28 September 1719. He assumed the style of Muhammad Shah.

FALL OF SAYYID BROTHERS

None could now be prouder than the Sayyid brothers; they had placed on the throne four nominees one after another, the last one being a lad of 19 who they expected, would meekly play to their tune. But the high-handedness which they had displayed, together

⁴⁵ Nikusiyar was a son of prince Akbar, the rebel son of Aurangzib. He was a prisoner in the Agra fort. He was proclaimed as emperor by one of his employees named Mitra Sen. (Khafi Khan, 825-27. Risāla, 74). Shiv Day, 28a. Ahvāl, 173b, Kamraj, 68b. Qasim, 85b).

⁴⁶ Khafi Khan, 833. Qasim, 95a. Kamwar, 366b

with their insatiable lust for power, weaned away from their side quite a large volume of active sympathy and moral support. Even after the elevation of the fourth puppet to the throne, the horizontal and vertical currents of politics and diplomacy did not prove the less baffling for them. They conciliated Sawai Jai Singh who had never concealed his pro-Farrukh-siyar sentiments.⁴⁷ They assigned to him sarkar Sorath (subah Ahmadabad). The intermediary in this transaction was Ajit Singh of Jodhpur who for his signal services received the provinces of Ajmer and Gujarat.

In their relations with the Turani nobles, whose covert hostility was an important political factor, the Sayyids were less successful. Having decided upon a policy of dispersal, they won over Muhammad Amin Khan Itimad-ud-daulah by confirming him in the post of the second bakhshi. They appointed Sarbuland Khan to the government of Kabul. But Nizam-ul-mulk could neither be allowed to remain at the capital because of his popularity among, and influence over the Turani soldiery; nor was it advisable to send him to a distant province where he might have free scope to build up for himself a semi-independent position. The younger Sayyid was inclined to use violence against him; but he was persuaded to desist from such a wild course of action. In March 1719 Nizam-ul-mulk was prevailed upon to proceed to Malwa, on condition that he would not be replaced on any flimsy pretext'. This promise was, however, violated, and Nizam-ul-mulk was recalled from Malwa, which was offered to Husain Ali. Nizam-ul-mulk sensed danger, marched towards the Deccan, occupied the great fort of Asirgarh, and defeated and killed the Sayyids' agent, Dilawar Ali Khan, in June 1720. Another agent of the Sayyids, Alam Ali Khan, was defeated and killed in August 1720.⁴⁸

While the influence of the Sayyid brothers was thus being eclipsed in the Deccan, their attention in the north was distracted by the hostility of Chhabila Ram Nagar and his nephew Girdhar Bahadur at Allahabad. They had barred the road of remittance of treasure from Bengal which had been detained at Patna. To divert the attention and resources of the rebels, Jasan Singh of Kalpi was instigated to create trouble for them. But he was defeated and compelled to sue for peace. The situation at Allahabad threatened to be critical and required prompt action. Three armies were directed to converge upon the rebels. Undaunted, Chhabila Ram emerged out of the fort to extend a hot welcome to his enemy. In the course of operations,

47 Khafi Khan, 838.

48 Khafi Khan, 818, 847, 857, 874. Kamvar, 360a, 363b, 370ab, 371a, 372a. Qasim, 81b, 99b, 195-196 Ahwāl, 153a, 165ab, 169b.

however, he was struck with paralysis and died; but Girdhar Bahadur continued the resistance. Upon this the Sayyid brothers took the emperor from Fathpur to Agra, and ordered a bridge to be thrown across the Jamuna to facilitate the movement of troops.

When Girdhar heard of the preparations for the siege of Allahabad, he sent his representatives to the Sayyids to discuss terms of peace. But the latter were unable to decide upon an agreed approach to the issue. Abdullah favoured accommodation, whereas Husain Ali pressed for action. For the moment the elder brother had his way, and Girdhar was promised the governorship of Avadh. Probably he got an inkling of the difference of opinion between the Sayyid brothers; in any case he could not persuade himself to have faith in Abdullah's promise. On the pretext of completing the last rites of his uncle he requested a year's grace. At the same time he started active preparations for standing a long siege. His duplicity proved intolerable to the impetuous Husain Ali, and he made up his mind to himself supervise the siege operations at Allahabad.

Abdullah was much perturbed at the resolve of his younger brother, as he suspected that the latter wanted to appropriate to himself the treasure stored in the fort of Allahabad. Luckily, the strain between the two brothers was eased by fresh proposals from Girdhar and his request that Ratan Chand be sent as the intermediary. He went to Allahabad and succeeded in convincing Girdhar of the bona fides of his patrons. In May 1720 the latter agreed to surrender the fort of Allahabad on condition that the subah of Avadh be assigned to him, that he should be invested with powers to appoint all civil and military officers in the province under his charge, and that a gift of 30 lakhs of rupees be given to him from the Bengal treasure.⁴⁹ The acceptance of these terms by the Sayyid brothers is a clear indication of their utter lack of political insight. The surrender of the fort of Allahabad brought them none the nearer their goal. It added neither to their prestige nor to their popularity.

Hardly had the din of the drums sounded to celebrate the victory at Allahabad faded than the report of Dilawar Ali's catastrophe began to weigh heavily upon the nerves of the Sayyids. The prospect of the Amir-ul-umarā's entire family falling into the hands of the victor was very alarming. Speedy instructions were, therefore, issued to Alam Ali, asking him to avoid precipitating the struggle with Nizam-ul-mulk and directing him to wait for the arrival of Husain Ali. Conciliatory letters were sent to Nizam-ul-mulk, who, in reply, pro-

State C
29 Khas R.R. 42-46. Qasim, 95b, 96ab, 97b. Kamwar, 369-370a., Shiv Das,
31b, 34b, 35ab. Tārīkh-i-Muzaffari, 230.

R.R.R L.F

No. 989

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fessed friendship and added that he had gone to the Deccan to counteract the increasing inroads of the Marathas and to protect the Amīr-ul-umarā's family.

But the pretence of reciprocal good will could not be sustained for long; events were moving fast to expose its stark unreality. The report of Alam Ali's defeat and death terribly upset the Sayyid brothers' equilibrium; but the mutual suspicion between them prevented them from tackling the situation with cool calculation. Their rivals gained the upper hand but they did not know how to deal with them. At first, they behaved harshly towards the Turani clique consisting of Muhammad Amin Khan and Abdus Samad Khan, and even contemplated their death by violence. But on the failure of their attempts to kill them they adopted a conciliatory attitude. This was neither wise nor opportune. Either the Turanis should not have been estranged, or else they should not have been spared, when once they had been subjected to insult and humiliation. The right course was to have done away with them, and thus scorch the source of mischief and intrigue at the head-quarters. Nizam-ul-mulk was at too great a distance, and far too involved with the affairs in the Deccan even to think of vengeance, not to speak of planning it. But the Sayyid brothers were no adepts in statecraft. They were mere soldiers.

Nor were they able to come to a quick decision with regard to their plan for the suppression of Nizam-ul-mulk. After much discussion it was settled that Abdullah should stay at Delhi to look after the security of the northern provinces; Husain Ali and the emperor should go to the Deccan with the entire establishment of the four subahs in Hindustan as also of the six subahs in the Deccan. As the Turanis were too dangerous to be left behind Muhammad Amin Khan and others were compelled to accompany the expeditionary force. This marked the beginning of the end of the ascendancy of the Sayyid brothers. The elder one was separated from the younger, and the court became a hot-bed of plots and intrigues.

The most active person in the game was Muhammad Amin Khan. He resorted to tactics which would delay the movements of Husain Ali. He offered to mediate between the Amīr-ul-umarā and Nizam-ul-mulk by guaranteeing the safe return of the former's family from the Deccan; he also volunteered to send his son Qamr-ud-din to escort it to the north. But the proposal did not find favour with Husain Ali. As an alternative, Muhammad Amin Khan suggested the dismissal of his Mughal followers whose fidelity, he said, would be dubious when they would face their former commander (Nizam-ul-mulk) ranged on the opposite side in the field of battle. This sugges-

tion, too, was rejected. Husain Ali was unable to penetrate the mask which covered the real designs of Muhammad Amin Khan who by his manœuvrings had succeeded in lulling the Amīr-ul-umārā into a false sense of security.

According to Khafi Khan, Muhammad Amin Khan had always been planning the overthrow of the Barhas, but he had not so long considered it prudent to seek assistance of his friends and acquaintances in this dangerous project. But now the time was ripe to take a few trustworthy persons into confidence. At first only Sa'adat Khan and Haidar Khan Kashghari were made privy to the plot. But later on, Abdul Ghaffar and Mir Jumla were also included in the clique. Contact was established with the emperor's mother through Sadr-un-nisa, a protege of Sayyid Abdullah. A hint was thrown to the emperor only when the final dispositions had been made.

The first attempt of the conspirators to slay Husain Ali, while he was on the march, did not materialise. This had been planned by Qamr-ud-din Khan and Sa'adat Khan. Now, a more elaborate scheme was drawn up. When the royal army was encamping at Todah Bhim, Muhammad Amin Khan, having escorted the emperor to his tent, feigned illness and retired to Haidar Quli's tent. When the emperor entered his private apartments and Husain Ali reached the gate of the royal enclosure, Mir Haidar Khan, who had a speaking acquaintance with him, approached him and placed a written statement in his hands. It was a bitter complaint against Muhammad Amin Khan. As the Sayyid was busy reading it Mir Haidar found him off his guard. He stabbed Husain Ali and 'with one wound despatched him'. This happened on 8 October 1720. Though the assassin was soon cut to pieces, wild confusion overtook Husain Ali's followers.

Sa'adat Khan rushed into the inner apartments whither the emperor had retired and 'with the utmost devotion he took his hand and led him out'. Here Muhammad Amin Khan mounted him on his elephant and sat behind him as his attendant. After a brief mêlée the partisans of Husain Ali fled helter skelter. One of them, Rai Shironān Das, a Kayastha and an 'old agent of Sayyid Abdullah', shaved off his beard and whiskers and escaped in the guise of a faqir to join his patron. The other, Ratan Chand, the right-hand man of Qutb-ul-mulk, was subjected to unspeakable humiliation and torture. He was stripped naked and taken to Muhammad Amin Khan who gave him some clothes but put him under arrest. Muhammed Singh, son of Churaman Jat, was brought a prisoner, but he was pardoned by the emperor.⁵⁰

50 Shiv Das, 46a, 47a-48ab. Khafi Khan, 887, 902-7, 909-10. Qasim, 107,

Sayyid Abdullah was terribly perturbed to hear of the assassination of his younger brother; and he resolved to take the fullest revenge upon the perpetrators of this dastardly crime. He remonstrated with the emperor against the perfidy to which Husain Ali had been subjected and demanded that the miscreants should be duly punished. At the same time he commenced preparations to fight it out with his opponents. He proclaimed as sovereign another prince named Ibrahim under the style of Abdul Fath Zahir-ud-din Muhammad, and issued instructions for the recruitment of an army. But he was striving to achieve the impossible. The Mewatis and other turbulent zamindars began to harass him; and they plundered his baggage and tents.

Nevertheless Abdullah continued to collect a huge army. Among his supporters were: (i) some newly created officers like Najm-ud-din Khan, the second bakhshi; Salabat Khan, the third bakhshi; Bairam Khan, the fourth bakhshi; (ii) the released courtiers of the time of Rafi-ud-darjat; and Farrukh-siyar's nobles like Itiqad Khan, and Hamid Khan Bahadur, the uncle of Nizam-ul-mulk; (iii) deserters from the royal army like Ghulam Ali Khan and others; (iv) Churaman and his followers. But this motley band of soldiers suffered from financial stringency and was more eager to share the spoils than face the bullets. Its leadership was weak and divided, its organization far from satisfactory.

On the other hand the imperial army, though smaller in number, was more compact and was led by veterans like Haidar Quli Khan Bahadur Nasir Jang, Muhammad Khan Bangash, Sabit Khan and Bayazid Khan Mewati. Abdus Samad Khan and Sawai Jai Singh were unable to arrive in time; but some three or four thousand horse were sent by the latter to augment the strength of the imperialists. Sa'adat Khan and Muhammad Amin Khan were already there to guide and inspire the troops.

The rival armies confronted each other at Hasanpur on 13 November 1719. Haidar Quli Khan opened the battle with a barrage of fire from his guns. By the evening most of Abdullah Khan's mercenaries had deserted their master, and when the morning dawned not more than two or three thousand of his men were left with him. Throughout the night the imperial army had continued its destructive work. When the fight was resumed the Sayyid had little to hope for; yet he and his brother Najm-ud-din Ali Khan continued to fight valiantly till they were overpowered and compelled to surrender. Abdullah

was handed over to the charge of Haidar Quli. He was poisoned to death two years later.⁵¹

It was sheer accident which had raised the Sayyid brothers to political prominence. They were utterly unfit to play the role which had devolved on their shoulders. At best, their place lay in the provincial sphere; all-India politics was much too complicated for their dull and stunted intellect. Afluenice had made them ambitious; but their vision remained narrow and distorted. Husain Ali proved himself to be a good soldier, but Abdulla was neither a general nor a statesman. At no stage of their meteoric career were they able to form a correct estimate of the political situation; and when driven into tight corners, neither of the two hesitated to sacrifice the interests of the empire. It was Husain Ali who showed the way north to the Marathas and enabled them to see the weakness of the empire in all its nakedness and to exploit it. It was Abdulla who abetted and instigated the anti-empire activities of the Jats and the Bundelas. Thus both of them seriously damaged the foundations of the imperial edifice. Moreover they set the immoral precedent of insulting and humiliating the members of the royal house, a precedent which became a common practice in the years to follow. They made kings but destroyed the empire.

RELIGIOUS TROUBLE IN KASHMIR

It was during the period of the Sayyid brothers' ascendancy that religious trouble broke out in Kashmir. It arose because of the frenzied zeal of Mahbub Khan *alias* Abdun-Nabi Kashmiri who, with a party of restless Muslims, went to the deputy governor and the qazi and, presenting to them 'certain legal opinions, demanded that the Hindus should be interdicted from riding on horses, from wearing coats (*jama*), from putting on turbans and armour, from going out for excursions in the fields and gardens, and from bathing on certain days'⁵². When the government officers declined to accede to these fantastic suggestions, Mahbub and his followers took the law into their own hands; they molested the Hindus and subjected their houses to arson and loot. The rabble one day attacked Majlis Rai, a respectable Hindu, who had gone with a party to ramble in the fields and gardens. He escaped and took protection with the deputy governor Mir Ahmad Khan. The violence of the mob now turned

⁵¹ Khafi Khan, 911-12, 914-15, 921-22, 932-33. Yahva, 130ab. *Ahu'l*, 27b, 178ab. Qasim, 114ab, 116ab. *Ri'al*, 77b, 78a, 79a, 88b. Shakir, 24b-25a. Shiv Das, 54b-55ab, 56a, 61b.

⁵² Khafi Khan, 887.

against the latter. His house was surrounded; Majlis Rai and his followers were dragged out; their ears and noses were cut off and some of them were circumcised.

This brutal savagery continued for five months. The imperial officers witnessed it helplessly, their power having been usurped by the rioters whose leader Mahbub was styled Dindar Khan. "He acted as ruiier, and taking his seat in the mosque, discharged the government business."⁵³ Upon the receipt of the report of the outbreak Munim Khan was sent from Delhi to suppress it. On his arrival in Kashmir the miscreants became nervous, and their leader sought the intercession of a saint named Khwajah Abdullah. The latter asked him to go to the mir bakhshi Shahur Khan. When Mahbub went to the house of the bakhshi, he was assassinated by the Shias at the instigation of the saint. The followers of Mahbub attacked the Shia quarters and for two days indulged in an orgy of blood, killing about 2,000 persons including women and children and plundering property worth several lakhs. In the end Munim Khan took severe steps to punish them.

The above details need not lead us to the conclusion that there was a general rising of the Muslims against the Hindus. The trouble was due to the madness of a single individual who succeeded in exploiting the religious sentiments of some, and the covetousness of many more. The government officials, who were Muslims, did not side with the rioters; nor did the respectable Muslims. The deputy governor Mir Ahmad Khan and the bakhshi Shahur Khan had to suffer at their hands. The Shias were not with them; Khwajah Abdullah went to the length of instigating the murder of the leader. The outbreak was sporadic. Its object was not the promotion of religion, but the satisfaction of individual greed and vanity; its consequence, loss of much innocent blood and property.

REIGN OF MUHAMMAD SHAH (1719-48)

Muhammad Shah left the field of Hasanpur for Delhi on 19 November 1720. He was magnanimous in his treatment of the dependants and followers of the Sayyid brothers. Asadullah Khan, a cousin of Husain Ali, who had lost all his property in the general confusion, was permitted to leave for Mecca. Musrat Yar Khan, who was coming to the assistance of Abdullah, on finding on his arrival that all was over, sought the intercession of Khan Dauran. He was presented to the emperor and was promoted to the rank of 5,000 + 2,000.

Nijabat Ali, a youth of thirteen or fourteen, the adopted son of Sayyid Abdullah, was ordered to be confined with the latter.⁵⁴

The emperor arrived at the outskirts of the capital on 20 November 1720, and halted there for two days. Here Sawai Jai Singh paid his respects to him. After entering the capital Muhammad Shah held a grand darbar in which he rewarded his supporters. Haidar Quli Khan was promoted to the rank of 7,000 + 7,000 and granted the title of Mu'izz-ud-daulah. Muhammad Amin Khan, Itimad-ud-daulah, was appointed wazir, and the subah of Multan and the faujdari of Muradabad were assigned to him. Shapur Khan, brother of Mir Haidar Khan, the assassin of Husain Ali, was promoted to the rank of 4,000 + 2,000. Samsam-ud-daulah was made mir bakhshi with the title of Amīr-ul-umārā. Qamr-ud-din Khan was appointed second bakhshi and dārogha-i-ghusal-khānah. Sa'adat Khan was advanced to the rank of 5,000 + 5,000 with the title of Sa'adat Khan Bahadur and the privilege of kettle-drums.

An important administrative step which the emperor took on this occasion was the abolition of jazīa, upon the representation of Sawai Jai Singh and Girdhar Bahadur. This hated tax, abolished by Akbar and re-imposed by Aurangzib, continued to be levied during the reigns of Bahadur Shah and Jahandar Shah. But Farrukh-siyar, perhaps at the instance of Sayyid Abdullah's factotum Ratan Chand, abolished it after his accession to the throne. It was re-imposed in 1718 by Inayetullah, the diwan-i-khalsā, very much against the wishes of Ratan Chand. But upon the accession of Rafi-ud-darjat the order was repealed. It is not clear as to who was responsible for the revival of the tax in the opening years of Muhammad Shah's reign. It was permanently abolished in 1720; and later not even the efforts of Nizam-ul-mulk to restore it met with any success.⁵⁵

As emperor Muhammad Shah had neither the talent nor the desire to take any interest in matters political, he wanted to lead a life of uninterrupted gaiety with the least concern or worry for administrative details. He surrendered himself to the superior will of the successive groups of his favourites. In the first instance it consisted of a quarto⁵⁶—the woman Rahim-un-nisa, better known as Koki Jiu, the eunuch Hafiz Khidmatgar Khan, Rushan-ud-daulah Zafar Khan of Panipat, and Shah Abdul Ghaffar. They continued to dominate over the mind of the emperor for 12 years. They were supplanted

54 Khafi Khan, 929-30, 934-36, Kamwar, 373b-74ab.

55 Kamwar, 373b, Khafi Khan, 648-49, 775, 817, 936. Shiv Das, 63a, 65ab. *Iqbāl Nama*, 131.

56 See *Medieval India Miscellany*, Vol. I, 134-232.

in 1732 by Khan Dauran Samsam-ud-daulah and his brother Muzaffar Khan. After their death in 1739 their place was taken by another quarto: Amir Khan, Muhammad Ishaq, Asad Yar Khan and (in 1742) Safdar Jang. Thus the reign of Muhammad Shah may justly be styled as a period of ascendancy of the favourites.

The reign of Muhammad Shah after the fall of the Sayyids divides itself into two parts of unequal duration, the important event which separates the one from the other being the invasion of Nadir Shah, 1738-39. Besides the petty intrigues of the court, the main interest in the first period centres round the growing influence of the Marathas and their pressure on imperial possessions. Under the inspiring leadership of Peshwa Baji-Rao I the Marathas struck their forward policy. They emerged out of the narrow limits of the Deccan and carried their arms far into the very heart of the Mughal empire. Gujarat was lost to the empire in 1735; Malwa followed in 1741. Prominent imperial generals like Sarbuland Khan, Abhai Singh of Jodhpur, Sawai Jai Singh and Nizam-ul-mulk could not control the rising tide of Maratha aggression.

BUNDELAS AND JATS

Challenges on a lesser scale came from the Bundelas and the Jats. Upon the shifting of the imperial pressure to the south during the second half of Aurangzib's reign the Bundelas had become active under Chhatrasal. But in 1705 he was conciliated and appointed to the command of 4,000. On the death of Aurangzib he joined Bahadur Shah in his struggle against Kam Bakhsh. He also vigorously fought on the side of the Mughals against the Sikhs. He appears to have done little to embitter his relations with the imperial power till the end of Farrukh-siyar's reign. But after Muhammad Shah's accession, Budh Singh Hada instigated him to create trouble on the borders of Malwa between Allahabad and Agra. His son Jai Chand captured the fort of Qamgarh, near Sironj and Bhilsa. Nizam-ul-mulk, who was the governor of Malwa, sent a large army to recover the fort. The expeditionary force was further augmented at Sironj by Afghan and Ruhela auxiliaries. The campaign proved successful. The fort was captured.

In 1720 Muhammad Khan Bangash was appointed to the subah of Allahabad within the jurisdiction of which fell a large part of Bundelkhand. As he was busy elsewhere, he sent his favourite Dilir Khan to deal with the Bundelas who had sacked Kalpi and killed the local officer. Although the invaders were driven out of Kalpi, Chhatrasal defeated and killed Dilir Khan in 1721. He also sent

help to Girdhar Bahadur at Allahabad and to the zamindar of Asothar, both of whom were defying the authority of the Sayyids. Two years later, when the Bangash had returned from the Rajput campaign, he turned his attention towards the Bundela insurgents. He penetrated into their country up to Banda, but his efforts remained inconclusive because he was called away on account of the turn the events had taken in the Deccan where Nizam-ul-mulk after defeating Mubariz Khan had virtually become independent. The Bundelas now overran Baghelkhand.

In 1726 the Bangash renewed his activities and succeeded in clearing eastern Bundelkhand of the rebels and in compelling Chhatrasal to take refuge in Jaitpur. In December 1728 he submitted to Muhammad Khan, but the latter's enemies at the court encouraged Chhatrasal to revive his opposition. To his help came Peshwa Baji Rao. The allies besieged their common enemy at Jaitpur. Muhammad Khan's appeals to the court for help met with no response and he was compelled to evacuate Bundelkhand.⁵⁷ After the death of Chhatrasal in 1729-30 the Marathas occupied about one-third of this province. But in 1737, when Nizam-ul-mulk was marching to expel the Marathas from Malwa, Hirdey Shah and other sons of Chhatrasal, as also the rajas of Datia and Orchha, joined him. But the imperial control over Bundelkhand had ceased to exist.

The Jat chief Churaman remained an active and trusted partisan of the Sayyid brothers whom he followed like a shadow. He was with the army of Husain Ali at the time of Farrukh-siyar's deposition, and accompanied him to Agra to fight Nikusiyar. He started for the Deccan with Husain Ali when the latter marched against Nizam-ul-mulk. But after the assassination of the younger Sayyid, the Jat leader was induced to join Muhammad Shah whom he beguiled into waterless deserts and across the territory of his enemy Sawai Jai Singh. He went over to Abdullah, and created confusion in the rear of the imperial army at Hodal by seizing the baggage train. He now set himself up as an independent ruler. In alliance with Ajit Singh of Marwar he sent assistance to the Bundelas to keep the imperialists busy in the east. But his leadership was seriously imperilled when he imprisoned his nephew Badan Singh, and then released him at the intercession of other Jat chiefs.

In 1720 Sa'adat Khan, whose treachery against the Sayyid brothers had secured for him the emperor's favour, was appointed subahdar of Agra with specific instructions to deal with the Jats. Badan Singh

⁵⁷ *Ma'sirul-umarā*, II, 510. Shiv Prasad, 171b. Kamwar, 311ab. Shiv Das, 67ab. Khāṣ Khan, 850-52. *Iqbāl Nama*, 163-64, 166-67. Shakir, 27a. Warid, 11b.

fled and took shelter with him. But Churaman's son Muhkam Singh defeated Nilkantha Nagar, Sa'adat Khan's deputy, upon which Sa'adat Khan was removed from his post to make way for Sawai Jai Singh. Churaman now committed suicide. His sons were besieged by the imperial forces at Thun, which was captured in November 1722. Compelled to seek safety in flight, they made their way to Ajit Singh. Upon this Jai Singh installed Badan Singh as the Thakur of the Jats.⁵⁸ He was a quiet and politic man, sincerely devoted to the arts of peace. Within a very short time he became powerful, and shook off dependence upon the Rajput state of Amber. He dominated the entire districts of Agra and Mathura and posed himself as the protector of the Hindus against Muslim oppression. He arrogated to himself the title of *Braj Raj*. He built the strong fort of Dig. He died in 1756. He was succeeded by Suraj Mal.

FAILURE OF NIZAM-UL-MULK

It was this atmosphere of distraction and disintegration which a pusillanimous and care-free monarch like Muhammad Shah was called upon to control. He had hardly any interest in current politics. Wine, women, and music were his pastimes. Nor did he have an able and devoted set of advisers deeply concerned with the welfare of the state. The only capable noble who could have saved the situation was Nizam-ul-mulk. In 1722 he was summoned to take up the reins of government. But the stupidity of the sovereign, the mischievous misrepresentations of his rivals, and the ridicule of the court minions disgusted him. His schemes of reform were opposed, for they cut at the very source of the income of many courtiers. His orders were defied by provincial governors because they were greedy for power. Therefore, in full appreciation of the bitter fact that the sovereign was beyond reform, Nizam-ul-mulk returned to the Deccan.⁵⁹ The wizarat was once more handed over to Qamr-ud-din, son of Muhammad Amin Khan, who 'considered it supreme wisdom to keep his post and do as little work as possible'. Like his master he was a hard drunkard and an extremely indolent man. The mutual regard between the sovereign and his prime minister may be judged from a remark in a letter addressed by the former to the latter asking him to return immediately to court without concluding the Maratha campaign in 1733. "With you wine is lawful; without you water is unlawful."⁶⁰

58 Khafi Khan, 836, 930, 945. Shiv Das, 79b, 80a. *Risala*, 98b. Kamwar, 379ab.

59 Ahwāl, 181, 185ab, 196a. Khafi Khan, 849, 948-49. Yahya, 134a.

60 Khush-hal, 1063b. Warid, 85. Rustam Ali, 265.

With a weak sovereign on the throne and an indolent and licentious minister to advise him, the condition of the court may better be imagined than described. It was composed not only of braggarts, but of cheats and dissimulators. It is said that whenever the unwelcome report of a Maratha incursion reached the capital, the emperor sneaked away on a hunting excursion or a pleasure trip. Nor could this pack of self-seekers unite even in the face of common danger. When Sa'adat Khan proposed armed resistance to the intruders from the Deccan and undertook to drive them out of north India, provided Agra, Gujarat, Malwa and Ajmer were assigned to him, Khan Dauran and Sawai Jai Singh advocated a policy of conciliation, because neither of them possessed the requisite military skill or the necessary strength of will to face the Marathas. The result was that with every succeeding year the Maratha spectre began to loom larger over the political horizon of north India. From 1732 onward yearly campaigns had to be undertaken to counteract the increasing vigour of the invaders' activities. In 1737 they actually attacked Delhi, though Baji Rao retired without inflicting much harm upon the capital. At last, the consensus of opinion at court once more favoured the return of Nizam-ul-mulk. But the evil had gone too far, even the old veteran had to sign the convention of Bhopal and concede the Maratha demands (January 1738).

INVASION OF NADIR SHAH

To add further to the internal confusion a holocaust burst upon the political firmament of north-western India. Nadir Shah invaded India and reduced to dust the power and prestige of the Mughal empire. The invader is said to have carried with him 'sixty lakhs of rupees and some thousand gold coins, nearly one crore worth of gold-ware, nearly fifty crore worth of jewels, most of them unrivalled in the world: the above included the Peacock Throne'. In addition, the province of Afghanistan was ceded to him. The Mughal empire was not only truncated, it was deprived of its soul.

DECLINE OF NOBILITY

The imperial court after the departure of Nadir Shah presented a dismal picture. It was bereft of its brilliant grandeur and of its gorgeous wealth which had dazzled the eyes of foreigners. Its political prestige had totally disappeared. Muhammad Shah and his prime minister, Qamr-ud-din Itimad-ud-daulah II, began to sink deeper and deeper into the abyss of vice and voluptuousness and their example was followed by others. Of the elder nobles Sawai Jai Singh had already returned to his own territory. He was now more interested

in the inter-state politics of Rajputana than in the intrigues in Delhi. Nizam-ul-mulk was called away to the Deccan owing to the pressure of the Marathas on his dominions and the rebellion of his son Nasir Jang. Before leaving Delhi he had secured the emperor's permission to transfer his title of Amīr-ul-umārā to his son Ghazi-ud-din Khan Firuz Jang. He also succeeded in staving off the humiliation to which the new favourites of the emperor wanted to subject Qamr-ud-din. As to Sa'd-ud-din Khan, the khan saman and mir atish, his influence on the administration was only nominal. Samsam-ud-daulah Khan Dauran and his brother Muzaffar had already died at Karnal.

The younger set which stepped in to fill up the void created by the death or departure of older nobles consisted of men of inferior calibre; they were unfit for the trust reposed in them by their master. Umadat-ul-mulk Amir Khan, the third bakhshi, a Persian of high family connections, of cultured and refined tastes, though ambitious, was a cypher in civil administration. When his plot to overthrow Qamr-ud-din 'fell through', he was sent away to Allahabad. Mutaman-ud-daulah Ishaq Khan I, another Shurtari Persian, the recipient of the highest honours and multitudinous favour from his master, a sincere and devoted well-wisher of the emperor, died in 1740. His eldest son succeeded to his title as Ishaq Khan II. Another favourite was Asad-ud-daulah Asad Yar Khan, a native of Agra, a man of pleasant manners, benevolent and discreet. In 1743 arrived at the court Safdar Jang, the successor of Burhan-ul-mulk Sa'adat Khan, and in the following year he was appointed mir atish and viceroy of Kashmir.⁶¹

In view of the fact that Qamr-ud-din Khan was constantly immersed in pleasure, 'craving more for the sight of beautiful lotuses than for the solution of the intricate problems of the state', the younger clique gained a stranglehold on the mind of the gay sovereign. Though their efforts to overthrow the prime minister failed, their intrigues continued unabated. The leader of the conspiracy against the Turanis was Ishaq Khan II, Amir Khan pulled the wires from a distance at Allahabad. But in August 1743 the emperor summoned Amir Khan and Safdar Jang from their respective provinces of Allahabad and Avadh. Their arrival at the court strengthened the Irani faction, which began to concert measures to undermine the influence of the Turanis. The first step towards that end was the suppression of the Ruhelas.⁶²

DISINTEGRATION OF EMPIRE

Safdar Jang had a veritable cause of fear from the Ruhela leader Ali Muhammad Khan who was steadily pushing on his conquests

⁶¹ *Iqbāl Nāma*, 278. *'Imād-us-Sa'ādat*, 31-32. *Chahār Gulzār-i-Shujāt*, 387a, 393. *Siyār-ul-mutakkharrin*, 847, 852.

⁶² Anand Ram Mukhi, *Safar Nāma*, 12-80. *Siyār*, 853-855. *'Imād-us-Sa'ādat*, 43.

in all directions. Perhaps he had also infringed the frontiers of Avadh. The matter was represented to the emperor who sanctioned an expedition. The ensuing campaign exposed the total bankruptcy of soldierly skill of Muhammad Shah and his nobles whose mutual suspicions prevented them from taking a united course of action. The wazir and Qalim Khan Bangash secretly supported the Ruhelas, whereas Safdar Jang and Amir Khan were bent upon ruining them. Upon the intervention of Qamr-ud-din, Ali Muhammad tendered his submission. He was pardoned and sent off to Sirhind. When Ahmad Shah Abdali entered Lahore, he opened negotiations and made terms with him. He left Sirhind and recovered Ruhelkhand in 1748.

Ever since the reign of Farrukh-siyar Bengal, Bihar and Orissa had become a semi-independent unit in charge of a governor who owed only nominal allegiance to Delhi. Shortly after the invasion of Nadir Shah, the deputy governor of Bihar, Alivardi Khan, defeated and killed his master Sarfaraz Khan, the subahdar of the three provinces, and secured recognition of his title by bribing the emperor. But his claim for the possession of Orissa was disputed by a relation of the dead governor who invited the intervention of Raghuji Bhonsle of Nagpur. For about a decade Bengal, Bihar and Orissa were subjected to a series of Maratha incursions. At the emperor's request Peshwa Balaji Baji Rao led an expedition to Bengal in aid of Alivardi Khan against Raghuji Bhonsle. In 1751 Alivardi concluded a treaty, promising payment of *chauth* for Bengal and virtually ceding Orissa to Raghuji Bhonsle.

Rajputana too slipped out of the imperial sphere of influence. But the political atmosphere there was very unsettled. Several important states were suffering from the evil effects of disputed succession. In Jaipur the dispute was between Ishwari Singh and Madho Singh, in Jodhpur it was between Ram Singh and Bakht Singh. On top of it came the rivalry between Kotah and Bundi, and the attempt of Sawai Jai Singh to reduce Bundi to the status of a vassal of Jaipur by ousting Budh Singh and placing upon the *gadi* his nominee Dalil Singh. Budh Singh's wife appealed to the Marathas and in 1734 Maharao Holkar and Ranoji Sindhia attacked Bundi. Two years later Peshwa Baji Rao visited Rajputana to levy *chauth*. Udaipur accepted his demands, but Jaipur very adroitly put the Peshwa off the scent by promising to secure for him a compromise with the Mughal government and the cession of Malwa.

In the Punjab at the time of Nadir Shah's invasion Zakariya Khan was the governor. On the Persian ruler's suggestion Multan was added to his charge in 1739, and he was promoted to the rank of *hasht hazari*. He was an able and strong administrator. But on his death in 1745

civil war broke out among his sons. At first the emperor did not appoint a governor to succeed Zakariya Khan, but in 1746 he nominated Yahiya Khan, son of the late governor. Mir Munim was to be the deputy governor. But Yahiya was dispossessed by his younger brother Hayatullah, who on the one hand requested the emperor to confirm him in his title, and on the other appealed to Ahmad Shah Abdali, Nadir Shah's successor, to come to his assistance.

INVASION OF AHMAD SHAH ABDALI

A new invader now appeared on the Indian scene. The Abdali crossed the Indus in January 1748 and occupied Lahore, his friend Hayatullah Khan having fled to Delhi. When the report of the Abdali's advance towards Lahore reached the capital the emperor was ill; but a large army was sent under the wazir Qamr-ud-din Khan, the mir atish Safdar Jang, and Ishwari Singh of Jaipur. When these chicken-hearted generals heard of the fall of Lahore, they were overtaken by consternation. To encourage them the emperor sent prince Ahmad under the guardianship of Saadat Khan Zulfiqar Jang. The imperial army came face to face with the Afghan army at Manupur, near Sirhind, where an engagement took place in March 1748. The wazir was killed, but the Afghans were defeated. Prince Ahmad recovered Sirhind.⁶³ Before his return to the capital Muhammad Shah died (25 April 1748).

That the deceased sovereign was a man of parts cannot be denied. But long captivity had crushed all initiative in him; and when he was elevated to the throne he was almost a spent-up force. He gave himself up to unceasing rounds of pleasure and amusement in complete detachment from state affairs. He was fickle-minded and vacillating; he surrendered his political conscience to his favourites and ministers. But his affable nature endeared him to the people. His generosity and indolence prevented intrigues against him. During his long reign of about thirty years we do not hear of any rebellion directed against the person of the sovereign. He was indeed a puppet, but none of his ministers ever thought of behaving rudely towards him, as the Sayyid brothers had done towards Farrukh-sivar. Even Nizam-ul-mulk, the wisest and most resourceful of the nobles, did not like to be rude and insolent towards the emperor. When he found that he could not reform the court and the administration, he quietly left for the Deccan. Under Muhammad Shah the Mughal imperial state altogether lost its dignity, and the process of its disintegration became almost complete. With his death the old order came to a close.

⁶³ Anand Rām, *Tazkira*, 282-292, 300-302, 313-315, 325, 370-377. *Tārikh-i-Ahmed Shāhī*, 4b-5a, 8a-9b.

CHAPTER TWO

SUCCESSORS OF MUHAMMAD SHAH : END OF IMPERIAL AUTHORITY

(1748-1771)

EMPIRE IN DECADENCE

THE GREAT MUGHALS, ancestors of Muhammad Shah, were great and strong men. Babur, the founder of the empire, had fought numerous battles against heavy odds, and had swam every river he came across. This sturdiness was maintained in the family to a greater or lesser degree till the time of Aurangzib, the last of the Great Mughals. But their self-indulgent descendants of the eighteenth century wasted all their energy and much of their enormous resources on their own personal enjoyments, completely neglecting the affairs of the government of which they were the head. They wore shirts with numerous folds of the finest muslin the world could manufacture, through which some parts of their body were easily visible. The invigorating breath of their highland home in Central Asia had been weakened by sensual passion; their battle-cry of 'Allah' had changed into the passionate cry for wine and women. The robust Mughal nobility and soldiery of Balkh and Bokhara had grown soft in the luxurious cities of Delhi and Agra, and their strong religious convictions had given place to false superstitions. Their old manliness was converted into foppery, and the habit of drinking had become so widely prevalent among them that "even the chief qazī used to smuggle his daily dram into his house". The heroic and vigorous officials and soldiers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were succeeded by vicious and delicate creatures.

The later Mughals were both weak and incompetent. Moreover, they had to contend with so many rebellions, intrigues and conspiracies at court, and combinations among the new political forces that were arising in the country, that they became merely phantom rulers.

The Mughal empire which had once included in it the whole of India and Afghanistan from the Hindukush to Assam and from Gilgit to Cape Comorin had considerably shrunk in its extent. Bengal, Bihar

and Orissa under Alivardi Khan, and Allahabad and Avadh under Safdar Jang, were independent for all practical purposes. Ruhelkhand was ruled over by Ali Muhammad Khan Ruhela, and parts of the provinces of Agra and Delhi up to Faridabad (16 miles south of the imperial capital) by Suraj Mal Jat independently. The trans-Indus territory which had been surrendered to Nadir Shah in 1739 was governed by the Afghan king Ahmad Shah Abdali. Rajputana owed no real allegiance to Delhi. Gujarat Malwa and Bundelkhand were under the Marathas. The Deccan had passed beyond the control of the emperor. His rule was now confined to the tract lying between Agra on the Jamuna and the Indus.

Simultaneously the moral prestige of the empire had greatly dwindled. Nadir Shah's invasion had given it a death blow, and whatever was left was 'destroyed on the one hand by the Marathas who were bold enough to knock at the gates of Delhi and lay large imperial provinces under contribution, and on the other by Ahmad Shah Abdali, who by the force of his own energy or that which he imparted to his generals, commenced penetrating almost every second or third year into the rich plains of north India, in truth to plunder, but with some affectation of the Muslim cry of a 'holy war' and 'Islam in danger'.

To check the growing effeminacy of the Mughals, to curb the invaders from the north-west who had begun to invade this 'land of gold, to attack and crush various refractory peoples who had risen in this country, to stop the tendency of provincial viceroys to establish independent dynasties, to inject new life into the decaying system of government, and to restore the lost prestige of the distracted, enervated and tottering empire attacked by enemies within and without: such were the problems which confronted the later Mughal emperors. It was a task of which they were utterly incapable.

AHMAD SHAH AND HIS FAVOURITES

Muhammad Shah died in April 1748, and was succeeded by his only son Ahmad Shah. The new emperor commenced his career under comparatively favourable circumstances. His claim to the throne was not challenged. He was in the prime of life, and had just won the glory of having defeated Ahmad Shah Abdali at Manupur. He had able men to serve him. But all those advantages were lost as a result of his incapacity for work, neglect of duty and lack of confidence in his ministers. Though quite grown up, being 22 years old at the time of his accession, he knew absolutely nothing about the art of government. As he was born of a dancing girl, who had been taken into wedlock by Muhammad Shah, his father had neglected his education and training, and had even frequently ill-treated him, in spite of

the fact that he was the sole heir to the throne. No civil or military office was ever given to him in accordance with prevalent custom. He was not even provided with sufficient money to enjoy the ordinary comforts of life; nor was he permitted to indulge in manly sports and games, not to mention any schooling.¹ The only companions of his childhood and youth had been women and eunuchs of the harem, all of dissolute and debased character. The result was that his inherited dullness of mind and intellect was allowed to grow unchecked, and in consequence he came to possess no personality, no ability for administration and no capacity for leadership. Indeed, he lacked all qualities which were essential for political success, especially in those days when the stability of the empire depended solely upon the personal qualities of the emperor.

This poverty-stricken and neglected youth of no intellect and no ambition suddenly found himself in possession of the resources of an empire. Impelled by heredity, influenced by the shameless examples of the harem, unable to control reckless passions, the new ruler succumbed to the charms of wine and women, leaving the empire to fare as best as it might. His harem contained the prettiest girls that could be procured from all parts of India and Central Asia; it occupied an area of four square miles. The affairs of the state were placed in the hands of a notorious eunuch named Javid Khan,² the paramour of his mother, who had not given up her loose character even in the life-time of Muhammad Shah.

After a couple of years, when his sexual tempo had slowed down and want had begun to be felt in the imperial harem for failure of revenues, he started attending to the state affairs; but his orders, issued without any wise counsel, lacked practical common sense, and were consequently ignored. As he possessed no personal courage and perseverance, his anger, if aroused at all at such disobedience, never passed beyond the bounds of mere words.³

Ahmad Shah had two great favourites: his own mother and her paramour Javid Khan. Udhram Bai, the queen-mother, a woman of poor intellect and immoral character, failed in commanding the respect due to her rank; but she commenced administering state affairs. The high officers of the state waited in her porch every morning, and she held discussions with them from behind a screen, eunuchs serving as intermediaries. All the important petitions from all over the empire were read out to her, and she issued orders on them which

¹ *Tārīkh-i-Ahmad Shāhī*, 2b-3a, 13ab.

² Shakir Khan, *Tārīkh-i-Shākīr Khan*, 60a. Shah Nawaz Khan, *Mīrāt-i-Āftab Nūmā*, 267b. Khwajah 'Abdul Karim Kashmīrī, *Bayān-i-Waqdī*, 72a.

³ *Ahmad Shāhī*, 13ab. Shāh Nawaz, 287b.

were final. She was granted a number of titles, of which the highest was *Qibla-i-Ālam*. She received the rank of 50,000 horse. Her birth-days were celebrated with great eclat, and sums amounting to two crores of rupees used to be spent on a single birthday. Her brother Man Khan, a scamp and a professional dancer behind singing girls, received the title of *Mu'tqad-ud-daulah* and the rank of 6,000.⁴

Udham Bai's unprecedented promotion was naturally followed by the rapid rise of Javid Khan. He was given the rank of 6,000. He was put in charge of the office of the superintendent of the privy council, the intelligence department, the imperial elephants, grants and appointments, the estates of the princesses of blood royal and the emperor's privy purse. After some time this eunuch was promoted to the rank of 7,000 and granted the title of Nawab Bahadur with a standard, banner and kettle-drums. The ministers had to receive orders from him on official business. "Never since Timur's time", says the court historian, "had a eunuch exercised such power in the state; hence the government became unsettled. The hereditary peers felt humiliated to pay court to him before any affairs of state could be transacted."⁵

Sayyid Salabat Khan Zulfiqar Jang became the chief paymaster with the title of Amir-ul-umara; while Intizam-ud-daulah Khan-i-Khanan, the eldest son of the late wazir Qamr-ud-din Khan, was appointed second paymaster. Among the important provincial governors was Muin-ul-mulk, the second son of the late wazir; he was confirmed in the viceroyalty of the Punjab.

SAFDAR JANG AS WAZIR

Along with these appointments followed the nomination of the wazir or the prime minister of the empire in the person of Safdar Jang (June 1748). He was granted the rank of 8,000 horse and 8,000 foot. He was also given the post of superintendent of the private chamber (*Ghusalkhāna*), and the governorship of Narnaul and Allahabad in addition to Avadh, his hereditary province. His son Jalal-ud-din Haidar received the title of Shuja-ud-daulah and was appointed superintendent of imperial artillery.

Though Safdar Jang held the highest post in the empire, yet his position was considerably weak. He was considered by the hereditary Turkish nobles as a foreign-born adventurer on account of his family's short service in this country. To personal jealousy was added racial

⁴ Ahmad Shāhī, 13b, 15b, 16b, 108. *Siyār-ul-mutākkhārīn*, 872. *Bayōn*, 72a. Shah Nawaz, 267b. Harcharan das. *Chahār Gulgār-i-Shujātī*, 400a.

⁵ Ahmad Shāhī, 14b-15a, 16b, 25a. Shakir, 63a. Harcharan das, 599b.

difference. Almost the entire administration of the empire was controlled by the Turks, while Safdar Jang was an Irani. Besides, he was a Shiah, and the Turks as also the vast majority of Indian Muslims were Sunnis. The Hindu rajas also, being in sympathy with the Indian Muslims, supported the Turks. The emperor was a tool in the hands of Javid Khan who, with the support of the queen-mother, usurped all the important functions of the wazir. In spite of all these difficulties Safdar Jang aimed at restoring the lost provinces of the empire and suppressing the rebellious chiefs such as those of the Jats of Bharatpur, the Bangash Afghans and the Ruhelas. But as time passed, his difficulties increased, and intrigues against him became so thick that he found it extremely hard to maintain his position at court.

Safdar Jang did not possess those qualities of character which might have enabled him to face all these difficulties successfully. He was a weak general and a poor leader of men. To his personal daring he added rashness and haughtiness, which negated all its effect. He lacked foresight, cool judgment and iron will which could sustain him amidst trials and tribulations. He was most extravagant. He spent 46 lakhs on the marriage of his son, while the largest sum spent by any Mughal emperor on the wedding of a favourite son did not exceed 30 lakhs.⁶ He lacked the instinct of choosing the right sort of men to be his counsellors. Wanting in diplomatic skill for building up a party or a coalition he could not carry his schemes through. Judged by the results of his five years' administration which ended in complete failure he should be placed in the category of third-rate ministers.

Safdar Jang's initial difficulty was the secret hostility of the 'fickle and brainless' emperor. Within a few months of his assumption of office an attempt was made to attack him when he was returning home after the public prayer. This was followed by an imperial order, issued at the instigation of Javid Khan, inviting Nasir Jang of Hyderabad to come to Delhi with a strong force to oust the wazir. The matter came to Safdar Jang's notice; he took measures for self-defence. Ahmad Shah pacified him by conciliatory gestures. When Nasir Jang reached the Narmada (May 1749) he received an imperial order directing him to go back to his subah. Two years later, when Safdar Jang was busy in Ruhelkhand, his chief supporter at court, Salabat Khan, the mir bakhshi, was deprived of all his offices and properties (June 1751). His post was given to Ghazi-ud-din Khan, with the title of Amīr-ul-umārā and the subahdari of Agra. His

⁶ *Siyār*, 858. Chulam Ali writes that 46 lakhs were spent by Safdar Jang while Shah Jahan had spent 31 lakhs for the marriage of Dara. ('Imād-us-Sa'ādat', 36).

brother-in-law Intizam-ud-daulah was appointed subahdar of Ajmer with the title of Khan-i-Khanan.⁷ These promotions of the two leaders of the Turani party, arranged by Javid Khan, were intended to weaken Safdar Jang's position. The Ruhela campaigns and administrative responsibilities in Avadh kept the wazir away from the imperial court for long intervals, leaving the emperor's mind open to the dominating influence of the ambitious eunuch.

The conflict of interest between the wazir and the eunuch reached its climax in connection with the rebellion of Balram (popularly called Balu) Jat, a petty revenue-collector (chaudhuri) of Faridabad near Delhi. He plundered Sikandrabad, a town in the emperor's privy purse (*khalsa*) estate, only 32 miles from Delhi. The wazir could not punish him because he was under Javid Khan's protection.⁸ In August 1752 Safdar Jang got the over-mighty eunuch murdered by treachery.⁹ It was a political blunder which proved disastrous for the wazir. The emperor and the queen-mother were irreconcilably antagonized. What was worse, the control of the puppet emperor and the leadership of the court party were transferred to Imad-ul-mulk, son of Ghazi-ud-din Firuz Jang and grandson of Niazm-ul-mulk Asaf Jah. This youngman was endowed with a character marked by 'an utter lack of the moral sense, a boundless ambition, a shameless greed of money, and a ferocious cruelty of disposition that made him one of the monsters of Delhi history'.¹⁰

Javid Khan's sudden death left Safdar Jang in full control of the situation; but his selfish and short-sighted policy alienated the emperor and the nobility. He did nothing to strengthen himself by re-organizing the army, improving the finances and forming new alliances. Most unwisely he got Imad-ul-mulk appointed mir bakhshi. By restricting admissions to the emperor's presence the wazir reduced him virtually to the position of a captive. The queen-mother provided the leadership for a court conspiracy against him. The first step was to expel his men from the Delhi fort (March 1753). Things moved rapidly. The emperor dismissed Safdar Jang and declared war against him (May 1753). After desultory warfare for a few months and Safdar Jang's failure to take Delhi by assault peace was made in November 1753. He returned to his own subah of Avadh and played no further role in imperial politics.¹¹

⁷ *Hadrat-ul-'alam* 11, 190, 191. *Ahmad Shāhī*, 17b, 18b, 29a-30a, 35b, 36b. *Bayān*, 248. Shakir, 72.

⁸ *Ahmad Shāhī*, 22b-23a, 38a-40a. Shakir, 71

⁹ *Ahmad Shāhī*, 40a-41b. Shakir, 71, *Bayān*, 273.

¹⁰ J. N. Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, I (2nd. ed.), 253. -

¹¹ Full account in *Ahmad Shāhī*, 37-89. Shakir, 72a, 74. *Bayān*, 277-80.

RISE OF IMAD-UL-MULK

While dismissing Safdar Jang the emperor had appointed Intizam-ud-daulah wazir in his place, with the titles of Qamr-ud-din Khan Bahadur and Itimad-ud-daulah, and invested Imad-ul-mulk who continued to hold the office of mir bakhshi with his grandfather's titles of Nizam-ul-mulk and Asaf Jah. After the fallen wazir's retreat to Avadh the emperor reigned for six months only. This was a period of the greatest anxiety and care for him, and he knew no rest and peace of mind. The struggle with Safdar Jang had heavily told upon the treasury and the revenues of the empire, and left the government with a large debt. To restore the financial prosperity of the empire it was necessary to build it anew out of chaos; but neither the emperor nor his wazir or mir bakhshi possessed the ability or capacity needed for the performance of this difficult task. Besides, there was the keenest rivalry between these two highest nobles of the state. Their enmity did not become public as long as they had a common enemy in Safdar Jang, but on his retirement an open conflict between them became imminent.

The financial problem was almost insuperable. The new army created during the late war numbering 80,000 cost the imperial exchequer 24 lakhs a month, and it had not been paid for seven months. The existing old army had remained unpaid for nearly three years, and the officials and servants of the palace had been in arrears for 32 months. The financial resources of the empire had been reduced to the verge of bankruptcy to such an extent that the emperor had to sell his jewellery and plate to raise two lakhs of rupees. No banker was ready to advance any money on the revenues of a district or province. Payment could no longer be put off to the three armed bodies: the Marathas, the Ruhelas and the Badakhshi auxiliaries seduced from Safdar Jang's service. The Ruhelas were the most troublesome, and their leader Najib Khan threatened to realize his arrears by force. He confined Imad, secured from him the revenues of the Gangetic Doab and some villages to the east of the Ganges, and left Delhi, looting and sacking as he went. Shortly afterwards, Najib seized Saharanpur and other places which were the jagirs of the wazir.¹² Realising that he must find money somehow or other Imad decided to raid the territory of the Jat ruler of Bharatpur and squeeze from him a large tribute.

Imad despatched his best lieutenant Aqibat Mahmud Khan who opened the campaign at Faridabad south of Delhi against Balu Jat.

¹² Ahmad Shahi, 42a-80b, 87a 88b, 103b-104a, 121a-125a. *Delhi Chronicle*, 73-80. *Siyār*, 891-893. Shakir, 67b-70a. *Bayān*, 76a-78b. Nur-ud-din, 13a.

Aqibat was shortly afterwards reinforced by 7,000 troops and 30 pieces of light artillery with rockets. Balu first showed a defiant attitude, but later on submitted and promised to pay tribute. Aqibat moved to Palwal where the zamindars refused to pay revenue for fear of Balu. He was informed that unless Balu was killed and his fort of Ballabhgarh captured, peace could not be restored in the district. Aqibat returned towards Ballabhgarh and invited Balu for an interview. Balu came with a son, his diwan and 260 troops. He was done away with along with his son, the diwan and nine other men. Balu's head was displayed on a pillar by the roadside near Faridabad. Ballabhgarh was captured and given over to plunder. A number of other Jat forts in the neighbourhood were seized. Early in January 1754 Aqibat was joined by Maratha auxiliaries under Khandoji, and the Jat territory on both sides of the Jamuna as far as Mathura was laid waste.¹³

Meanwhile the gulf between the emperor and Imad grew wider and wider, because the former had joined Intizam and, as already stated, no love was lost between him, the wazir and the mir bakhshi. Imad was an arch-intriguer and was successful everywhere. It was through him that Safdar Jang had been defeated.. He had vanquished the Jats on the south of Delhi; the Marathas were his steadfast allies. His greatest problem was lack of funds. Having failed to procure the same by other means, he made up his mind to usurp the rents of the crown lands and the lands of other nobles in the neighbourhood of the capital. He pressed the emperor to pay off the arrears of the army; but he was told that all dues could be cleared off from the income of the lands placed under his control. Imad then incited the solidiery to break out into riot before the palace and in the city. To pacify the paymaster the emperor paid him 15 lakhs; but this money was kept by Imad for himself, and the soldiers' disturbances continued as before. He also took possession of the crown lands in the districts of Koil, Sikandrabad and Rewari and starved the inmates of the palace.¹⁴

Imad then despatched Aqibat Mahmud to the emperor and he entered Delhi on 16 March. The emperor and the wazir were confined in their palaces, and the Hindu jewellers and all other wealthy people of the city were plundered by his Badakhshi soldiers numbering 5,000. He also sent his men to the east of the Jamuna to sack the crown lands. On 8 April his troops dispersed to all the custom-barriers of the city and plundered all the passers-by. Khwajah Bakhtawar Khan, the superintendent of the emperor's palace, went

¹³ Ahmad Shahī, 89-93a. 'Imād-us-Sa'ādat, 73.

¹⁴ Siyār, 892. Ahmad Shahī, 102b, 103ab, 109b, 111b, 113b.

to the wazir's house after sunset. On his way back he was attacked by the Badakhshis near the Jama Masjid; he could proceed further only after severe fighting and heavy losses on both sides. Afterwards he brought full force from the fort and opened fire on Aqibat who fled from the city next morning. In the day's fighting many men were killed and many houses were burnt in the Khas Bazar and the Khari Baoli. Aqibat still continued to plunder traders and merchants in the suburbs of the capital.¹⁵

Now Intizam formed a plan to check Imad's growing power. He wanted to form an alliance with Safdar Jang, Suraj Mal and the Hindu princes of Rajputana. For this purpose a personal conference of these members with the emperor was considered necessary. On the advice of the wazir the emperor moved with his harem to Sikandrabad from Delhi where he was almost a prisoner. On hearing this Imad and his allies—the Marathas—made peace with the Jats and marched to Mathura, evidently to attack the emperor. On 26 May Malhar Rao Holkar with 20,000 troops attacked the imperial camp.¹⁶ Ahmad Shah with his mother, one favourite wife and a son escaped to Delhi, leaving the rest of the imperial harem and his entire camp at the mercy of the Marathas. "Many of the raths of the women, which had been scattered during the confusion of the night, were overtaken by the Marathas who tore off their screens and took away the money in their carriages and the ornaments on their persons, many women were outraged. Some escaped to different sides, and some came to Delhi on foot."¹⁷ The Marathas then advanced to Delhi, commenced plundering people, and laid waste all the suburbs of the capital.

FALL OF AHMAD SHAH

On 1 June Aqibat Mahmud waited on the emperor, and persuaded him to appoint Imad wazir, and Ruz-afzun Khan, a supporter of Imad, the superintendent of the privy council, thus seizing both the high offices from Intizam-ud-daulah. Next day Imad interviewed the emperor and took solemn oaths of loyalty on the Holy Quran. He was invested with the prime minister's robes. Immediately after this Imad sent Aqibat to the princes' quarter to bring Muhammad Aziz-ud-daulah, grandson of Shah Alam Bahadur Shah. This prince was led to the Diwan-i-am, where he was enthroned as emperor

¹⁵ Ahmad Shāhī, 112a-124a, 125a-127a. *Tārikh-i-Muzaffarī*, 85-88. Shakir, 70ab. *Delhi Chronicle* gives different details.

¹⁶ Ahmad Shāhī, 128b-131a. *Siyār* 893-894.

¹⁷ J. N. Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, I (2nd. ed.), 302.

Alamgir II. Ahmad Shah and his mother were both arrested and imprisoned.¹⁸ The ex-emperor called for water in agony; 'some water in a piece of broken earthen jar was held up to his lips, and "the King of Kings of an hour ago was glad to drink from it".¹⁹

The results of the rule of a mere imperial figure-head served by incapable and unscrupulous ministers can easily be surmised. Politically the Mughal empire which comprised at the beginning of Ahmad Shah's reign the greater part of north India was deprived of its three valuable provinces: Lahore, Multan and Kashmir. The Afghan invader was still knocking at its gates in the north, while the Marathas were steadily gaining ground from the south. The Jats were becoming supreme in the west and the Ruhela Afghans in the east. In effect the rule of the Mughal emperors was confined to a few districts round the imperial capital.

The military and financial position of the empire had already suffered a good deal during the earlier reigns; but this decline now took a much more rapid speed. The crown lands, on the revenues of which depended the prosperity of the royal household, were usurped by Javid Khan, Safdar Jang and later on by Imad-ul-mulk. No money was available in the imperial treasury, and extreme poverty, distress and despair stared the emperor and the royal family in the face. With an empty treasury soldiers could not be paid and most of them were in the course of time disbanded. This ultimately led to the destruction of the military strength of the empire. Shakir Khan of Panipat, a faithful servant of the imperial house, and an eye-witness of the painful incidents of Ahmad Shah's reign, says:

'After Ahmad Shah's accession, in the course of time matters came to such a pass that a descriptive list of all articles in the imperial stores—the arms, carpets, cooking utensils and dinner plates, books and band instruments, and of every other karkhanah, was prepared and these articles were sold to the shop-keepers and peddlars, and most of the money thus realised was spent in paying the troops. This opened the door to the most unseemly and unspeakable mockery and insult by the public. Opulence was turned into distress. The Central Asian (vilayati) soldiers and the emperor's household troops forcibly carried off the valuable articles of all kinds from the houses of wazirs, amirs, sahus, traders and artisans to the shops (and sold them), thus reducing the nobles to disgrace. The amirs had no help but to wear only the clothes they stood in and to eat out of earthen plates... When the emperor ordered an inquiry, it was found that the soldiers' salary was three years in arrear. What chance was

¹⁸ Ahmad Shahi 131b-136b. *Siyār*, 894.

¹⁹ J. N. Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, I (2nd. ed.), 304.

there of a farthing remaining in the treasury? It became a reign of petty tribal chiefs."²⁰

REIGN OF ALAMGIR II (1754-59)

Alamgir II was born at Multan in June 1699. He was the youngest son of Jahandar Shah. He became an orphan at the age of 14 in 1713. Since then he had remained in captivity, leading his life in poverty and neglect, devoting his time to prayers, and studying history books. After his accession to the throne he aimed at following in the footsteps of his predecessor Aurangzib whose title he had assumed; but his sedentary habits of about forty years, his old age, and his dislike for the activities of outdoor life, such as hunting, marching and reviewing troops, made him unfit to be popular with the army.²¹ He was intelligent and sober, but possessed no capacity for leadership and no strength of character. He served as a tool in the hands of his wazir.

In view of the incapacity of the emperor the whole burden of administration fell on his wazir, and on his ability, character and leadership depended the safety of the remnant of the empire. Imad was the king-maker. His military strength was sufficient. His own Badakhshi troops, 12,000 in number, were the best fighting men, while his Maratha allies were ever ready to serve him. As regards his financial resources, his father had left him one crore of rupees out of which he had spent 70 lakhs in fighting against Safdar Jang, and all the revenues of the empire were at his disposal. But Imad did not possess those qualities which were needed to restore life and vigour in the decaying empire. He lacked the gift of diplomacy and political foresight. His administration proved an utter failure, and brought to the country nothing but anarchy and disaster. In the words of Sir J. N. Sarkar, "There has never been a wazir of Delhi whose rule was so barren of good result and so full of misery to himself and to the empire, to his friends and foes alike, as Imad-ul-mulk's... He was subjected to the grossest humiliation ever borne by any wazir, having been dragged through the streets of Panipat by his own soldiers (May, 1755) and seen the women of his harem outraged and exposed to the public gaze by the brutal Ruhelas (August, 1757)."²²

It was with the Maratha assistance that Imad had succeeded in bringing about a revolution in the Delhi government and installing

²⁰ Shakir, Sab.

²¹ *Tārīkh-i-'Ālamgīr Sānī*, 25b-26a

²² J. N. Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, II (2nd. ed.), 5.

himself in the office of the *wazir*. This alliance had been secured at a tremendous expense, the 5,000 Marathas costing him 13 lakhs a year. Besides, a large tribute had to be paid for his successful enterprise in capturing power and a huge amount of arrears was to be cleared. After the success of Imad's plot Raghunath Rao pressed him for payment of the promised subsidy. In view of the empty imperial treasury and disturbed condition of the country, this was not an easy job. Malhar Rao Holkar refused to release the ladies of the imperial harem captured from Ahmad Shah's camp at Sikandrabad until the arrears amounting to 40 lakhs had been cleared. Imad and Aqibat Mahmud offered personal security in order to save the honour of the royal family. Raghunath fixed the total dues from the Delhi government at 82½ lakhs, of which 40 lakhs were to be paid immediately and the balance after a time. So heavy a payment was almost impossible as the Maratha envoy in Delhi wrote to the Peshwa in October 1754: "There is no money in the emperor's house, there is not a piece with the *wazir*, their soldiers are dying of starvation, daggers and knives are being piled every day. In such a state of things we are pressing for our money. No cash, no jewel is available. In the last resort the *wazir* is asking us to take assignments for 13½ lakhs on the revenue of the lands round Delhi which were set apart for feeding the emperor and the *wazir*".²³

The most pressing problem for the *wazir* was to pay 40 lakhs in cash. To begin with, he deprived the brother and sister of the ex-emperor Ahmad Shah's mother of their cash and jewellery, and thus a sum of 3 lakhs was secured. It was paid to the Marathas on 10 June. He now decided to collect money by forced contributions. The nobles were too strong to be touched. So he levied impositions on traders and artisans, and raised 9 lakhs. Later a poll tax was levied from every man in Delhi, and one lakh was realised.²⁴ For the rest the *wazir* surrendered to the Marathas some villages from his own jagir, and many from the crown lands. The Maratha troops, who had scoured the entire neighbourhood of the capital in the course of their stay of eight months, at last retired from Delhi.

Nothing had been done so far to alleviate the grievances of the imperial troops and the palace employees who had not received even a fortnight's salary in three years. The Mughal soldiers began to plunder the defenceless people, particularly the Hindu traders and merchants and officials. The artillerymen of the *wazir* besieged his mansion..dragged out his chief manager, Aq'bat Mahmud Khan, and tore off his dress. Imad could not face his troops, but he loosened

23 SPD, XXI, 60; XXVI, 89-90. 'Alamgir Sānī, 5b-6b, 12a, 27a.

24 'Alamgir Sānī, 9b, 11b, 17a-19a, 25, 27a.

his fury on innocent creatures He blamed Aqibat for this unruly behaviour of his soldiers, and got him murdered The same day the ex-emperor Ahmad Shah and his mother Udhamp Bai were blinded by him.²⁵

The starving soldiers' riots and rowdiness became a regular feature of the reign of Alamgir II. On 14 August 1754 Nagarmal, the high diwan, was stoned by the personal servants of the emperor. In the same month Kishan Chand Sud, an accountant, was forcibly seized, tortured for 15 days, and then ransomed. On 21 October the soldiers entered the wazir's house, roughly handled his butler and plundered his property Two days later the Badakhshi troops surrounded the wazir's mansion and dragged the bakhshi out of his *palki* On 14 November Nagarmal was compelled to leave his house in the city and take shelter with the Marathas²⁶ In his absence his property was plundered On 18 November the Mughal troops looted the shops of sweetmeat-sellers and bakers, and had to be driven away by gunfire from the fort walls

When they failed to get payment of their dues, the wazir's troops began to plunder the houses of every well dressed and well fed person. They molested and seized women and set them free on receiving money Hukumat Rai, a relative of the head assistant in the office of the emperor's harem superintendent, was belaboured and deprived of all his property The wazir stopped with difficulty his Badakhshi soldiers from plundering the house of a notable Muslim officer They resented the wazir's interference, and on the following day a Badakhshi soldier fired at Imad while he was entering the fort Imad thereupon assigned the crown lands, which were the only source of income for the emperor and the royal household, to his Badakhshi troops and his allies, the Marathas This inflicted great hardship on the emperor and his family Only a month and a half after his accession Alamgir II found no conveyance available for the state procession on the day of Id The women in the harem actually suffered from starvation. On one occasion the chief financier of the heir-apparent brought a mug of broth from the charity-kitchen, and the prince asked him to send it for the palace ladies as no fire had been kindled in the harem kitchens for three days. On another occasion the starving princesses throwing off their veils set out of the palace to the city in protest, but the gates of the fort were closed on

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 6b, 8b, 20b *Tarikh-i-Muzaffari* 99-100 *Siyār*, 894.

²⁶ *'Alamgir Sāni*, 8a, 12b, 13b, 16b, 18a, 22b, 26a, 29a, 30-31b, 32a, 41b, 75a-79b. *Siyār*, 896.

them, and they spent a day and a night in men's apartment bewailing and crying.²⁷

The deplorable condition of the capital had its natural repercussion on the countryside. The Jats and the Gujars usurped the crown lands on the south and south-east of Delhi in the Gurgaon district and the neighbouring country. To the north and west of it, particularly in the districts of Rohtak and Karnal, the Afghan, Baluch and Ranghar zamindars seized whatever fell in their way. Among the leading usurpers and brigands who occupied vast estates and rose to eminence were Kamgar Khan Baluch of Farrukhnagar, 30 miles south-west of Delhi, who seized large tracts in the districts of Gurgaon, Rohtak and Hissar and in the Jind and Patiala states; Hasan Ali Khan of Jhajjar, the son of Kamgar Khan's brother; Bahadur Khan, a servant of Kamgar Khan, who established himself at Bahadurgarh (20 miles west of Delhi), Najabat Khan Ruhela of Kunjpura, 80 miles north of Delhi on the western bank of the Jamuna; Qutb Shah, the religious guide of the Ruhelas, who occupied parts of the Panipat and Sirhind districts; and Aulila Khan Baluch of Nizamgarh in the Saharanpur district. More ambitious and powerful than these adventurers was Najib Khan Ruhela who seized a large number of villages in the districts of Saharanpur and Meerut.²⁸ Thus within a radius of about 80 miles from the capital numerous bandit chiefs had raised their head.

Imad-ul-mulk sent his Badakhshi regiments, 11,000 strong, against Qutb Shah with orders to drive him away but these refractory soldiers got busy in plundering the people in the Panipat district. They opposed Qutb Shah 4 miles north of Karnal but were defeated; their baggage and war material were seized (March 1755). Putting a strong garrison in the fort of Karnal Qutb Shah advanced towards Sirhind. The Afghan troops of the local governor deserted him and joined Qutb Shah. On the other side of the Sutlej was the territory of Adina Beg Khan. He came out to repulse the rebel chief, and in a fierce battle at Rupar on the banks of the Sutlej defeated and drove him away.²⁹ Adina Beg then advanced as far as Karnal and occupied the whole territory.

About this time the wazir marched from the capital with the emperor and reached Panipat (April 1755). He offered to pay his Badakhshi troops on the basis of their actual numbers as it would check their dishonest practices. Early in May, about 250 of them raised a tumult at the gate of Imad's residence. The wazir who

27 'Alamgîr Sânî, 15b, 17b-18b, 20a, 22b, 23b, 28b, 29a, 41b, 52a, 190a. Shakir, 37a. *Persian Sources of Indian History*, Vol. I, Part I, p. 44.

28 *Rohtak District Gazetteer* (1883), 18-19. 'Alamgîr Sânî, 44b.

29 'Alamgîr Sânî, 43b, 44b.

was sitting only with a waist-coat on owing to the intensity of heat, came out to inquire what had happened. He was immediately seized, abused in the most filthy language, and then dragged through the streets to the camp at a distance of two miles. There he was assaulted and beaten and his clothes were torn to shreds. The emperor's repeated messages produced no effect on the ferocious Turks. The wazir was saved by a captain of the Badakhshis after he had been tortured for two hours. These regiments which formed the best troops of the Mughal empire were then dissolved.³⁰

INVASION OF AHMAD SHAH ABDALI

The loss of authority, prestige and personal honour by the highest official of the state and his ignoble deeds had their natural effect on the empire, which was shortly afterwards invaded by Ahmad Shah Abdali and reduced to the most wretched condition. The Afghan invasion of 1755-57 involved serious disgrace and humiliation for the emperor and the wazir as also cruel sufferings for the imperial city. Abdali departed from Delhi in April 1757 leaving Najib Khan as his supreme agent at the Mughal capital.

The Ruhela chieftain usurped all the crown lands and treated the emperor more roughly than Imad had done. Naturally Alamgir II preferred his old master to the new; he longed for Imad's return to office with the help of the Marathas. The Marathas advanced to Delhi and were joined by Imad. Raghunath Rao opened the attack in August 1757 and entered old Delhi which was plundered. Najib's infuriated men attacked Imad's mansion, slew the defenders, plundered everything, and committed atrocities on women. But the Marathas compelled Najib to come to terms. Early in September he retired from the city and the fort, which were taken possession of by the Marathas. His rule of five months was over; he went to his estate, defied the Delhi government, and continuously wrote to the Abdali to invade India again.

A few months later (April 1758) the Marathas occupied Lahore expelling the Abdali's son Timur Shah who was the local governor. Imad found the tide turning in his favour. Najib Khan was cooped up in his estate. The Marathas were at the height of their power. There was no immediate apprehension of another Afghan invasion. Imad's growing arrogance took shape in his hostility to the heir-apparent Mirza Abdullah known by his titles of Ali Gauhar (conferred upon him in 1754) and Shah Alam (granted in 1756). -

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 48-51a, 54a-58b. *Tarikh-i-Muzaffari*, 109-110.

ADVENTURES OF ALI GAUHAR

This prince was the eldest son of Alamgir II and was nearly 29 years old at this time. He was the ablest of all the princes, and might have restored the prestige of the Mughal empire if he had been given a free hand in the administration. But Imad could not tolerate a rival; he became bitterly opposed to him. In May 1757 the prince went to subjugate the rebel chiefs in his estates in the Rohtak and Gurgaon districts, and succeeded in this object to some extent. Imad grew jealous of him, and forced the emperor to issue orders for his recall. Ali Gauhar marched towards Delhi; but near the lake of Najafgarh he met Vithal Shivdev, a captain of Raghunath Rao, and won him over to his side. Imad was greatly alarmed and sent a detachment against them, but his troops were defeated. The wazir then resorted to treachery. He won over Vithal Shivdev on a promise to pay 6 lakhs of rupees, and afterwards sent letters to the prince under the seal of the emperor asking him to visit his father in the fort. The prince obeyed the summons, and put up in the mansion of Ali Mardan Khan. Imad at once besieged the house and attacked the prince. Ali Gauhar fought bravely, and eventually took shelter in Vithal's camp; but all his money and property were plundered. Imad paid 6 lakhs to Vithal, but the prince as also the Maratha commander escaped out of the capital. Imad compelled the emperor to declare the prince an outlaw.³¹

The prince and Vithal Shivdev moved through Farrukhnagar, Pataudi, Rewari and Dadri, plundering and laying contributions as they went. Imad bribed Raghunath who immediately recalled Vithal asking him to bring the prince with him. Vithal did not like to betray his friend, an unfortunate victim of intrigues. He gave him leave to go wherever he liked. The prince could not maintain his troops for lack of funds; so he told them that they were at liberty either to seek their fortune elsewhere or to stay with him. Most of them went home. Ali Gauhar retired to Hissar where he collected some money and troops, and then he arrived at Kunjpura in July 1758. On crossing the Jamuna he reached Mazaffarnagar and was warmly received by Najib Khan's men. Najib himself welcomed him at Miranpur, gave him plenty of food supplies, but declined to fight against the wazir. He advised him to seek assistance from nawab Shuja-ud-daulah of Avadh, the strongest Muslim noble in north India

31 *Siyār*, 905. 'Ālamgīr Sānī, 154-158b, *Shakir*, 82ab, 93a-94b. *Khazāna-i'-Āmīrā*, 43-49. *Miskīn*, 199.

32 'Ālamgīr Sānī, 175a-192a. *Siyār*, 905-906. *Khazāna-i'-Āmīrā*, 47-53, 59-66. *Shakir*, 83ab. *Shah Nawaz*, 272b.

and an enemy of Imad.³² The prince accepted Najib's suggestion and marched across Ruhelkhand to Avadh.

MURDER OF ALAMGIR II

After Raghunath Rao's return to Poona from the Punjab Peshwa Balaji Baji Rao put Dattaji Sindhia in charge of Maratha interests in north India. Early in January 1759 Dattaji arrived near Delhi and demanded immediate payment of the Maratha arrears from Imad on pain of plundering the capital. Negotiations for a peaceful settlement began, and the Marathas started looting the suburbs of the city to force the wazir to come to speedy settlement. Terms were agreed upon at the end of January, and peace was ultimately restored to the city. Dattaji then advanced to the Punjab, and after settling the Maratha affairs in that province returned towards Delhi and began operations against Najib. The Ruhela chieftain appealed repeatedly to Ahmad Shah Abdali, urging him to come to the rescue of the Indian Muslims and to crush the power of the infidels once for all. The Afghan ruler's acceptance of this invitation greatly heartened Najib and his followers. Dattaji despatched fast messengers to Imad inviting him to join the Marathas in crushing his (Imad's) bitterest foe Najib, and even authorized his agents to offer Imad 2 lakhs of rupees for his travelling expenses.³³

Imad got ready to join Dattaji and took leave of the emperor (November 1759). He halted at Muradnagar on his way to Shukartal when he received the definite news of Ahmad Shah Abdali's having arrived in the Punjab. Imad was greatly frightened as he feared that the Abdali might use the emperor and the ex-wazir Intizam against him. He formed a plot to get both of them murdered. The emperor was prevailed upon by an officer of Imad to visit a supposed saint who could work miracles in the Kotila. The fickle-minded emperor who had great faith in saints got ready. On 28 November he was led into a closely guarded chamber with only one attendant. There he was immediately stabbed to death by Balabash Khan, a captain of Imad. The emperor's corpse was thrown on the bank of the Jamuna below the Kotila, giving out that he had died by an accidental fall. Thus was committed the ghastly murder of a harmless, grey headed sovereign without bringing any gain to the perpetrator of a dastardly crime. On 30 November the regicides rushed into a prison cell where Intizam-ud-daulah, the ex-wazir, and Lutfullah Beg were saying their prayer. Both

33. *'Alamgir Sāni*, 192a-198a. Nur-ud-din, 23a, 27a. Shakir, 85b, 86ab. *Siyār*, 908.

of them were instantly strangled to death.³⁴ They threw their corpses with heavy stones tied to their body into the Jamuna, declaring that the two nobles had fled away in the night. Imad's agent enthroned Muhi-ul-millat, a grandson of Aurangzib's youngest son Kam Bakhsh, under the title of Shah Jahan II. He was a mere puppet in the hands of the wazir's men.

PANIPAT

Meanwhile Ahmad Shah Abdali had re-established his hold on the Punjab. The murder of the emperor provoked his wrath and accelerated his advance upon Delhi. He defeated and killed Dattaji Sindhia at Barari-ghat on 9 January 1780. He visited old Delhi on 21 January. The next day his troops plundered the old city and Paharganj, taking away the planks and beams of the houses for firewood. Yaqub Ali Khan, a cousin of Shah Vali Khan, the wazir of the Abdali, who had been living for long at Shahjahanabad, was appointed governor of the orphaned city of Delhi on behalf of the Afghan king on 31 January. The Abdali kept away from the capital for the whole month, campaigning against the Jats and the Marathas under Malhar Rao Holkar, returning to Delhi on 29 February. His troops plundered and slew the people of the city.³⁵ After two days he crossed over into the Doab and then encamped at Aligarh.

Imad had left Dattaji's camp a few days before the Barari-ghat disaster. For some time he waited at Bharatpur. In July he joined the Marathas in an attack on the city of Delhi. Yaqub Ali Khan retired to the fort. The city was placed in Imad's charge, the Marathas lay encamped in the suburbs. When Yaqub Ali sued for peace, the Marathas allowed him to depart for Aligarh to join his master with his property and troops on 2 August. Thus the Delhi fort passed into the hands of the Marathas. The occupation of the capital, however, yielded to them no financial gains; on the other hand they were required not only to guard it, but also to support the royal family and the palace servants. The spoliation by Nadir Shah and Ahmad Shah Abdali had left little in the palace, and whatever remained had been taken away by Imad. He had even removed a part of the silver ceiling of the Diwan-i-Khas. The Marathas were starving as no money had been sent by the Peshwa, and no revenues were forthcoming from north India. On 6 August the Maratha leader, Sadashiv Rao Bhau, stripped off the remaining portion of the silver ceiling of the Diwan-i-Khas and coined 9 lakhs

³⁴ 'Alamgîr Sâni, 214a-215a. 'Imâd-us-Sâ'âdat, 78. Siyâr, 908.

³⁵ Miskîn, 204-206.

of rupees. On 12 August the Bhau appointed Naro Shankar governor of Delhi with some troops for the defence of the city. On 10 October the Bhau deposed Shah Jahan II and proclaimed Ali Gauhar as emperor with the title of Shah Alam II.³⁶

The Marathas suffered the greatest disaster in their history at Panipat on 14 January 1761. They were plundered and killed everywhere; but with the help of the ex-empress Zinat Mahal, Naro Shankar escaped from the capital with his family and property. Out of gratitude Naro Shankar presented to the queen-mother 3½ lakhs in cash besides property which he could not carry away.

After his victory at Panipat Ahmad Shah Abdali set out for Delhi and reached there on 29 January. The queen-mother welcomed the conqueror at Narela, 20 miles north of Delhi, and offered presents: One lakh of rupees for him and fifty thousand for his wazir. The Abdali staved in the palace and allowed his troops to plunder the people indiscriminately. Not satisfied with plunder, they demanded their arrears of pay for the past two years, but the Abdali had no money. Riots broke out in his army. At last the Abdali left for home on 22 March.

NAJIB KHAN AS DICTATOR OF DELHI (1761-1770)

At the time of his departure from Delhi Ahmad Shah Abdali issued instructions that Shah Alam II should be recognized as emperor, Imad as his wazir, and Najib as mir bakhshi. Imad was at Mathura in the camp of Suraj Mal. There he was invested with the wazir's robe by the Abdali's agent, waiting to be escorted to Delhi by the Jat troops. But Najib was not prepared to share with him the management of imperial affairs; a deep-rooted jealousy separated him from the unscrupulous wazir. Nor was Imad acceptable to the queen-mother as wazir, for he had murdered her husband Alamgir II. and driven away her son Ali Gauhar. Najib took advantage of the situation. He won over the queen-mother and the crown prince, Ali Gauhar. The latter came to the capital from Luni, 6 miles north-east of Delhi, both seated on the same elephant. Thus the capital passed into Najib's control. He became the head of the imperial army (mir bakhshi), faujdar of the metropolitan district and regent (mukhtar) of the imperial administration. In a word, Najib became the dictator of Delhi and supreme controller of the affairs of the empire. He maintained this position till his death on 31 October 1770. So the history of the Mughal empire during these ten years

³⁶ Raiwade I. pp. 222-224, 258-259. SPD. II, 130-131, XVI. 193: XXVII, 257-258. Shyār, 211-212, 912, Nur-ud-din, 34a

is the story of the last decade of Najib's career.³⁷ During this long period he seldom resided in Dehli, which was efficiently managed by his agents, particularly his son Zabita Khan who "pleased every one, especially the traders, by his strict justice, suppression of robbery, and sympathy with the people in their distress".³⁸

Najib wanted to win over as his ally Suraj Mal Jat, whose country had been left intact during the Abdali's campaign, and who was now the strongest and richest prince in north India. Deputed by him, Nagarmal had an interview with Suraj Mal on 24 October 1761. He persuaded Suraj Mal to visit Najib and to form plans to bring the wandering emperor Shah Alam II back to Delhi. The two chiefs met a few weeks later on the Jamuna at Dankaur-ghat, but nothing came out of this meeting.

The next two months were spent by Najib in suppressing rebellion in the district of Hansi-Hissar. In February 1762 he met Ahmad Shah Abdali in the Sirhind province where the invader was busy fighting the Sikhs. Najib remained with the Abdali till April, and visited him again at Lahore in October. He was held responsible for the payment 40 lakhs a year as tribute. The Abdali left Lahore for Afghanistan on 12 December 1762, and Najib reached Delhi on 18 January 1763.

A little later he was asked to wait on Shah Alam II at Sikandrabad where he had been brought by Shuja-ud-daulah. Shuja wanted to seize Farrukhabad, the estate of Ahmad Khan Bangash, but Najib dissuaded him from doing so with great difficulty.³⁹ Then a severe quarrel broke out between his Sunni Afghans and Shuja's Shiah Qizilbashes. He left the imperial camp on 16 May and went to his estate where he was long confined to bed on account of illness.

NAJIB AND JATS

About the end of the year 1763 there was a rupture between Najib and Suraj Mal. A fight between them took place near Ghaziabad on 25 December. While crossing a *nala* attended by a few men, Suraj Mal fell in with a Ruhela ambush. He was at once shot down, and his body cut to pieces. Najib did not follow up his victory by invading the Jat country, as he was still afraid of the strength and resources of the Jats.

Jawahir Singh, who succeeded Suraj Mal, began to make preparations for hostilities with Najib to wreak vengeance for his father's

³⁷ Nur-ud-din, 54b-55b, 123b. SPD, II, 144. CPC, II, 469. *Gulāb-Rahmat*, 114.

³⁸ J. N. Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, II (2nd. ed.), 278.

³⁹ Nur-ud-din, 56b, 59a-60b. *'Imād-us-Sā'ādat*, 87-91. *Khazāna-t-Āmīrā*, 54-60.

blood. He cleared off two years' arrears of pay of the army. He engaged 20,000 Marathas under Malhar Rao Holkar for 22 lakhs of rupees. Later during the campaign he hired 15,000 Sikhs. Apart from these auxiliaries, he had about 30,000 troops of his own. These preparations greatly alarmed Najib who wrote flattering letters to pacify Jawahir Singh.⁴⁰ But it was a question of prestige and honour with the Jats. Najib sent his agent Meghraj to Ahmad Shah Abdali at Qandahar asking for assistance. He passed along the foot of the hills via Jammu as the direct road through Lahore had been closed by the Sikhs.

Jawahir Singh besieged Najib in Delhi early in November 1764. The first battle was fought on 15 November, both sides losing nearly 1,000 men. Jawahir Singh then advanced to the Ruhela trenches and asked Malhar Holkar to support him in the assault, but the Maratha chief, who was friendly to Najib and had joined Jawahir Singh only to secure money from the Jat treasury, halted far behind the Jat army and no entreaties or appeals could make him move on. Thereupon Jawahir Singh changed his plan of action. He sent a detachment to cross the Jamuna to destroy the bridge of boats which Najib had built to secure his supplies from the Doab, and to attack the Ruhelas from the rear. This scheme would have succeeded well had not the Jat troops wasted time in plundering Patparganj, a big grain market. Najib despatched a strong contingent to oppose them. Many of the Jat soldiers were cut to pieces, and the rest were saved from annihilation by Naga troops sent by Jawahir Singh for their rescue. The battle raged till sunset, and then both sides retired to their camps.

On 18 November Jawahir Singh pitched his guns on the eastern bank of the Jamuna near Shahdara and bombarded the city from across the river for a fortnight. Meanwhile a large body of the Sikhs, numbering from 12 to 15 thousand, arrived near Delhi early in January 1765. Jawahir Singh went to interview them. More than a hundred chiefs met him. The conference began with the Sikh prayer called *Ardas* in which they said, "Jawahir Singh, the son of Suraj Mal, has come within the shelter of the Khalsa Jiu and become a Sikh of Nanak. He is demanding redress for his father's blood." This conduct was not to the liking of Jawahir Singh. The Sikhs also drove away his *huqqa*-bearer with insult and abuse as smoking is prohibited by the Sikh religion. But Jawahir Singh quietly bore all this as he sorely needed their help. It was decided that the Sikhs would attack the city from the north and stop supplies coming from the west, while Malhar and Jawahir Singh would continue the fight as before from

⁴⁰ Nur-ud-din, 60b-71a, 74b, 75ab-76ab, 83a. *Khazāna-i-'Āmīrā*, 194-205. Wendel, *History of the Jats*, 89-90. Sydr, 928-929. CPC, I, 2457.

the east. Shortly afterwards 10,000 warlike Naga sanyasis under Umaro Gir Gosain were taken into the pay of Jawahir Singh. Several fierce battles were fought, but the city was saved by Najib's superior generalship. There was, however, a severe famine in Delhi and the Ruhela troops were extremely hard-pressed.

Jawahir Singh had no trustworthy friend. Malhar Holkar, who had been bribed by Najib, was determined to see that no harm should come to the Ruhelas. Imad had been living on Jat bounty for several years and Jawahir Singh wanted to put him again in charge of the imperial administration; but the treacherous wazir did not hesitate to join Malhar in favour of the Ruhelas. Even the old Jat captains did not fully co-operate with Jawahir Singh. He felt so much disgusted that he opened negotiations for peace. Najib at once accepted the offer; he visited Malhar and Jawahir Singh on 9 February 1765. Jawahir Singh retired from Delhi on 16 February having spent nearly two crores of rupees but without achieving anything at all.⁴¹

*This triumph over the Jats, supported by the Marathas and the Sikhs, 'marks the climax of Najib's greatness'.⁴² In the meantime his patron, Ahmad Shah Abdali, who had invaded the Punjab in the winter of 1764-65, had been defeated by the Sikhs. He returned to Afghanistan without visiting Delhi and meeting Najib.

NAJIB'S LAST YEARS

Early in 1766 the Sikhs, who had been raiding Najib's lands since 1764, advanced as far as the Sonepat-Panipat area. Afzal Khan, Najib's Delhi agent, prohibited the people from visiting Kalka Devi near the Qutb Minar. On 17 April 1766 the Sikhs marched from Okhla-ghat and plundered rice and moist sugar in the Patparganj mart. Afzal Khan's men attacked them and put them to flight. The Sikhs moved up the east bank of the Jamuna and sacked Kutana, Jhanjhana and Budhana. Najib closely pursued them to the other side of the river, and at night crossing it at Kutana-ghat attacked the Sikhs in the morning. They were taken by surprise, and fled pell mell. Most of the booty acquired by the Sikhs fell into Najib's hands. Najib drove them to the neighbourhood of Kandhala where they crossed over the Jamuna, again ravaged Najib's estates, and then withdrew to their homes.⁴³

In the cold weather of 1766-67 Ahmad Shah Abdali again invaded India and called upon Najib to join him with seven years' arrear

41 Nur-ud-din, 75ab, 80b, 82a, 83ab, 84ab, 88ab, 91a. Wendel, 96-98. CPC, I, 2457, 2533a. *Khazāna-i-'Āmīrā*, 220-231.

42 J. N. Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, II (2nd ed.), 287.

43 Nur-ud-din, 101ab, 102a-103a, 106a-107a, 108b-109ab.

tribute. When the Abdali advancing towards Delhi reached Ismailabad (20 miles south of Ambala), Najib joined him (9 March 1767). The Abdali was anxious to visit the capital to plunder the people and gain money. But as Delhi was in charge of Najib it was his duty to save the city from the ravages of the ferocious Afghans. He, therefore, promised to pay 25 lakhs and dissuaded the Abdali with the utmost skill from proceeding onward. The invader also acceded to Najib's request to entrust the Sirhind province to his charge. This greatly alarmed Amar Singh of Patiala who had been managing this province on behalf of the Abdali for the past two years. He bribed Shah Vali Khan, the Afghan wazir, who persuaded the Shah to confirm Amar Singh in that province on his paying 9 lakhs of the arrears. This suggestion was finally accepted and Amar Singh was confirmed in his position with the superlative title of *Raja-i-Rājagān*.⁴⁴

In November 1766 the Sikhs advanced towards Delhi, sacking all the important villages and towns on their way. In December they appeared in the neighbourhood of the capital. Najib, who had still information about the movements of the Sikhs, hurried towards Delhi, and issued instructions to Yaqub Ali Khan to protect the city from the depredations of the Sikhs. Thereupon the Sikhs crossed the Jamuna and entered the Doab which they began to plunder.

In his declining health Najib failed to cope successfully with the rising power of the Sikhs whose raids in the upper Doab became regular and systematic. The final retreat of Ahmad Shah Abdali from the Punjab in May 1767 stimulated their power and ambition. Najib was so much overpowered by their fear that he once wished to go away to Mecca to spend his last days. He openly confessed himself beaten in letters written to Shah Alam at Allahabad and the queen-mother in Delhi. He offered to escort the emperor's family from Delhi to Allahabad. In sheer disappointment at his failure he withdrew his agents, troops and property from Delhi leaving the capital to its fate.⁴⁵

Like a far-sighted statesman Najib realized his own weakness in the formidable circumstances that had arisen in his old age. In March 1768 he handed over all the affairs of his government to the charge of his eldest and ablest son, Zabita Khan, and retired to Najibabad. In October 1769 he returned to Delhi and paid a visit to the crown prince in the palace. The renewed Maratha invasion of Hindustan in 1770 alarmed him. Feeling that his young and

44 Nur-ud-din, 110ab, 111a-112b. *Delhi Chronicle*, 211. SPD, XXIX, 119, 165. CPC, II, 12A. 415.

45 Nur-ud-din, 112a-113b. Miskin, 288. CPC, II, 846, 847, 1101. SPD, XXIX, 143.

inexperienced son would be unable to meet the situation he co-operated with the Marathas and managed to make a settlement between them and the Jats. His purpose was to 'preserve the capital Delhi safe and intact'. A month later he died (31 October 1770). Thus disappeared from the political scene a 'powerful personality' who, 'in the combination of first-rate military and administrative capacity, diplomatic skill, and tact in dealing with others, and above all in his instinctive perception of the realities of the politics of his day and concentration on the essentials, had no equal in that age except Ahmad Shah Abdali'.⁴⁶

SHAH ALAM II

As already stated, Shah Alam had been expelled from Delhi by the wazir Imad-ul-mulk in May 1758, and after wandering about for some time he had decided to take help from Nawab Shuja-ud-daulah of Avadh. In spite of many good qualities this prince was unfortunate throughout his life. He spent the first 25 years of his life with his father in prison, and so during the most impressionable period he could gain no experience of men and matters. But he was untouched by vice and indolence, because like his father he kept himself busy in the study of religious literature, history, and languages: Arabic, Persian, Turki and Hindustani. The French officer Jean Law, who was frequently in the company of the prince from 1758 to 1761, writes: "He loves reading and never passes a day without employing some hours in it .. He is of an inquiring mind, naturally gay and free in his private society, where he frequently admits his principal military officers in whom he has confidence."⁴⁷

Alexander Dow, an English officer, who came into close contact with the emperor when he was residing at Allahabad and received from him 'repeated testimonies of esteem and friendship', says: "Shaw Allum is robust in his person, about six feet high. His complexion is rather darker than that which was common to the race of Timur, and his countenance is expressive of that melancholy which naturally arose from his many misfortunes. He possesses personal courage, but it is of the passive kind, and may be, rather called fortitude to bear adversity, than that daring boldness which loves to face danger. He has been so often dismounted in the course of ambition, that he now fears to give it the rein; and seems less desirous to make any efforts to retrieve the power of his family than to live quietly under the shadow of its eclipsed majesty. His clemency

⁴⁶ Ghulam Ali, tr. J N Sankar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, II (2nd. ed.), 905.

⁴⁷ *Memoirs*, 329.

borders upon weakness, and his good nature has totally subverted his authority. He is daily induced, by importunity, to issue out orders which he takes no means to enforce, and which he is certain, will not be obeyed. From this blemish in the character of Shaw Allum arose the half of his misfortunes, for the great secret of establishing authority is to give no orders which cannot be enforced, and rather to suffer small injuries, than show resentment, without the power of punishing."

"His generosity", Dow continues, "is more than equal to his abilities, and, too often, ill bestowed. He is too much addicted to women and takes more pains to maintain his Haram than to support an army. But, though we cannot call him a great prince, we must allow him to be a good man. His virtues are many; but they are those of private life, which never appear with lustre upon a throne. His judgment is by no means weak; but his passions are not strong, the easiness of his temper is therefore moulded like wax by every hand; and he always gives up his own better opinion for those of men of inferior parts. He is affable in his conversation, but seldom descends to pleasantry. Upon the whole, though Shaw Allum is by no means qualified to restore a lost empire, he might have maintained it with dignity in prosperous times, and transmitted his name, as a virtuous prince, to posterity."

SHAH ALAM'S MILITARY ADVENTURES

When Shah Alam was still with Najib in the Upper Gangetic Doab he received an invitation from Muhammad Quli Khan, the imperial governor of Allahabad, to conquer Bihar with his assistance. Taking a large number of unemployed Sayyid soldiers into his employ he crossed the Ganges into Ruhelkhand about the end of November 1758. Many Ruhelas joined him. He quickly marched towards Lucknow, where on 7 January 1759 he was warmly received by Shuja-ud-daulah who presented him one lakh of rupees' in cash and rich gifts. He also promised support for the projected invasion of Bihar. Shah Alam reached Allahabad on 23 January; and taking Muhammad Quli's troops and raising fresh levies on his own account he arrived near Patna on 18 March. The expedition failed. Shah Alam evacuated Bihar in May, and spent the rainy season at Rewa.

About the end of October 1759 he marched again into Bihar by way of Mirzapur, Sasaram and Gothauli. At this last station, on 21 December, he heard the news of his father's murder (on 29 November) by Imad-ul-mulk. Three days later (24 December) he crowned himself as emperor under the title of Shah Alam II. But his prospects in Bihar did not improve. Defeated by Major Caillaud

at Sherpur on 22 February 1760, he planned an invasion of Bengal. His progress was, however, checked 20 miles north of Burdwan by English troops, and he hurriedly fell back on Patna. There Captain Knox foiled his attempt to take the city. Shah Alam wasted a couple of months more in south Bihar, and then retired, reaching the bank of the Jamuna in August 1760.

After the rainy season the emperor invaded Bihar again. He was assisted by Jean Law, a French officer. By this time his resources had considerably declined. He was without money, guns and ammunition. In a battle at Suan, 6 miles west of Bihar city, on 15 January 1761 he was defeated by Colonel Carnac who captured Law. The emperor sued for peace. The English welcomed this move as they wanted to give a legal form to their activities in Bengal and Bihar. The emperor visited Carnac on 6 February at Gaya and was highly honoured. The English gave him a daily allowance of 1,800 rupees; he confirmed their political and military arrangements in Bihar and Bengal.⁴⁸

Meanwhile Ahmad Shah Abdali, while returning home after the battle of Panipat, nominated Shah Alam II emperor. Shuja-ud-daulah, to whom the emperor had offered the office of wazir, showed his willingness to escort him to Delhi. Shah Alam, therefore, decided to leave Bihar. The English escorted him to the western boundary of Bihar on 22 May 1761. Shuja met him on 19 June at Sarai Sayyid Razi, and the emperor stayed at Jajmau for the rainy season.⁴⁹

Instead of escorting Shah Alam to Delhi Shuja-ud-daulah prevailed on him to recover Bundelkhand where after the battle of Panipat the Maratha influence had completely vanished. The emperor and Shuja set out in November 1761 and entered Bundelkhand early in January 1762. Kalpi, Moth, and Jhansi easily fell. The Bundela Rajput chiefs of Datia and Orchha paid tribute, but Raja Hindupat of Mahoba opposed them. The emperor returned across the Jamuna to Sheorajpur in the Kanpur district where he spent the rainy season.⁵⁰

In the beginning of 1763 the emperor proceeded towards his capital. Escorted by Shuja he reached Sikandrabad and summoned the Ruhela chiefs to join and escort him to Delhi. Shuja wished to annex the territory of Ahmad Khan Bangash. This frightened the other Afghan chiefs, such as Najib Khan, Hafiz Rahmat Khan and Dundi Khan, who were present in the imperial camp. Besides, a clash arose between the Sunni Afghan soldiery and the Shia troops of

⁴⁸ *Siyār*, 676, 682-685, 702-704.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 708.

⁵⁰ SPD, XXVII, 272. XXIX, 13. 'Imād-us-Sā'ādat', 80. *Siyār*, 926.

Shuja. The Afghan chiefs thereupon retired, about the middle of May, and the emperor's scheme of returning to his ancestral capital escorted by a united Muslim force failed. Shah Alam returned to Allahabad.

Mir Qasim, who had lost the subahdari of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa as a result of his hostilities with the English, visited the emperor in February 1764 and persuaded him and Shuja to help him in recovering his lost power by offering them large presents. Their combined forces were defeated by the English at Buxar in October 1764, and Shuja again met the same fate at Kora in May 1765. The emperor, who had been abandoned by Shuja, surrendered himself to the English. They lodged him in the Allahabad fort, as they had seized Allahabad, Banaras and Chunar in his name.

Clive returned to India in May 1765, met Shuja and Shah Alam in August, and made two separate treaties with them. Out of the nawab's dominions the districts of Allahabad and Kora were ceded to the emperor to whom earlier all the territories of Shuja had been promised. The emperor was also granted an annual sum of 26 lakhs (out of which 2 lakhs were to be paid to Najaf Khan) as the Bengal tribute. An English contingent was provided for his protection. In return he granted to the Company the diwani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, thus legally authorising them to appropriate the revenues of these three provinces.⁵¹ As a result of this treaty the emperor became a pensioner. The Company's treaty with Shuja made him a protected vassal of the English.

SHAH ALAM AS COMPANY'S PROTEGE

Shah Alam led a peaceful and comfortable life at Allahabad for six years (1765-1771) although it was a life 'intolerable to a man of honour and still more so to a ruler of the realm'.⁵² He was a sovereign in name only, as he had no capital and no hand in the administration. He was naturally anxious to return to Delhi. The English had recognized the importance of his return to the capital and they had promised to escort him to his capital as early as 26 May 1761. This promise was repeated from year to year till 1767, and was confirmed even by Clive in 1765. They, however, did not mean to fulfil it. Time was thus passing away. Najib Khan's relinquishment of the charge of Delhi in February 1768, chiefly for fear of the Sikhs, greatly alarmed Shah Alami as his family and the capital both stood in serious danger of falling into the hands of the Sikhs who were every year

⁵¹ *Siydr*, 768, 770-771, 773-774, 926.

⁵² J. N. Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, II (2nd. ed.), 403.

raiding that part of the country.⁵³ The emperor turned in all directions for support, but none except the Marathas responded to his call. They occupied Delhi—the masterless imperial city—on 10 February 1771. Shah Alam's agent concluded a treaty with them on 15 February 1771, according to which the Marathas agreed to escort the emperor to Delhi on payment of 40 lakhs of rupees in three instalments and on assignment of several territories: Meerut, seven other mahals, and the districts of Kara (Manikpur) and Kora (Jahanabad) or equivalent territory near Delhi. The heir-apparent in the capital affixed his seal to this treaty and later it was ratified by the emperor at Allahabad.⁵⁴

SHAH ALAM IN DELHI

The emperor left Allahabad on 13 April 1771. He was escorted by the English, while Shuja-ud-daulah provided him with carriages, tents, 12 lakhs of rupees, and 4,000 horse and foot. At Bithur General Sir Robert Barker left the emperor on 28 June. The latter continued his march to Kanauj and then to Farrukhabad, and halted at Nabi-ganj, 19 miles south-west of Farrukhabad, for the rainy season. Here Mahadji Sindhia joined him on 18 November, and shortly after this the imperial camp moved towards Delhi. On the New Year's Day, 1772, they were at Surajpur, 15 miles north-west of Sikandrabad. The dowager-queen, the crown prince and other princes welcomed the emperor on 3 January 1772 at Gharauli, 5 miles from Delhi across the Jamuna. The emperor entered his capital on 6 January, Monday, at a quarter past eight in the morning. This was the last day of the Muslim fasting month of Ramazan, to be followed the next day by one of the greatest of Muslim festivals, Id. Religious festivities coincided with the rejoicings at the emperor's return home.⁵⁵

SUNSET OF MUGHAL EMPIRE

By this time the Mughal period of Indian history may be said to have come to an end. Shah Alam II practically lived as a prisoner in the hands of one or the other of the contending parties seeking supremacy either at court or in the country. The Mughal empire as a reality had disappeared, though it still influenced the minds of men as an idea and a tradition. Only the emblem of its past glory remained in the person of the titular emperor. The sun of the grandeur of the

⁵³ It was reported after Najib's death Zabita Khan was guilty of gross misconduct in the imperial seraglio. (*Ibid.* 404).

⁵⁴ *SPD.* XXIX, 89.

⁵⁵ *CPC.* III, 693, 810. *Siyar,* 931.

great empire had set, leaving behind a small reddish patch on the horizon to vanish shortly. The centre of political affairs had already shifted to the east where a body of English merchants, the heirs of the Mughal empire, was slowly creeping up and making steady progress in control over this vast sub-continent.

During this period the state of the country deteriorated rapidly. Much of it had fallen a victim to confusion and chaos. Almost all the Mughal officials, high and low, were sunk in sloth and sensuality, and misrule had become the order of the day. No justice was done to the weak and the oppressed. Sycophants and eunuchs revelled in plunder, and there was no check on misdeeds, violence and oppression. The universal anarchy of the time compelled the people of north India to make the villages self-sufficient units, and measures of defence were adopted in common. The villages as a general rule were protected by a ditch and a rampart, and the majority of the male population learnt wrestling, riding and the use of spear, sword and matchlock. Each village became a small republic, ruled by its panchayat, and all its requirements were supplied by the villagers themselves. Cultivation was reduced to a miserable state and its object was to meet the requirement of the villagers themselves.

The general insecurity that prevailed in the country made the people chicken-hearted and fickle-minded. Whatever their troubles and trials, miseries and misfortunes, at the hands of the invaders and marauders, they would not miss an opportunity to enjoy a fair or social gathering. A contemporary chronicle, the *Chahār Gulshan*, gives a long account of fairs of which as many as 15 took place at the imperial capital. On this remarkable description Sir J. N. Sarkar remarks: "As we read the account of these numberless fairs and gatherings round Delhi, we almost forget that the *Chahār Gulshan* was written in 1759. The gay and fickle butterflies of the capital seem to have turned the year into one long holiday and spent their lives in a round of merrymaking and sight-seeing, as if Nadir Shah's invasion were not a thing of living memory to them and the spear of the Maratha and the long knife of the Durrani Afghan did not yearly glitter before their eyes." Dancing girls were a common feature of life on festive occasions; the rich employed them frequently for their personal entertainments.

Trade did not flourish. Roads were bad, rivers unbridged and travelling unsafe. Cesses were levied by every chief, big and small, through whose territory the goods passed. Whatever trade still existed was carried by the Baniaras, a band of armed men moving in a large body, carrying grain, salt, sugar and other commodities on their pack oxen from place to place.

In the time of Aurangzib the extent of the Mughal empire had reached its peak of expansion; but owing to the absence of fast means of communication its unity could not be maintained. The viceroys were given wide powers which were often abused. The central government failed to give right direction, partly because it was usually out of touch with the actual state of local affairs in different parts of the empire. There being no defined rules of succession, anarchy preceded every change of ruler. Luxury destroyed morals, and trust gave place to suspicion. Disloyalty and corruption prevailed everywhere. The economic doom loomed large, as every government official aimed to enrich himself at the cost of the state. The eclipse of the moral virtues played a large role in the collapse of the political, military and economic structure of the Mughal empire.

CHAPTER THREE

INVASIONS FROM THE NORTH-WEST

BETWEEN THE YEARS 1739 and 1769—a period of thirty years—India suffered from as many as eleven invasions from the north-west. The invaders committed the most horrible atrocities and snatched away large slices of territory in the north-west from the Mughal government which was incapable of discharging its political and moral responsibility for the security and defence of the frontier. After the first battle of Panipat India enjoyed immunity from foreign invasions for about two centuries, but in the first half of the eighteenth century the country was in a sad plight. The descendants of the Great Mughals inherited nothing of the bravery and statesmanship of their ancestors. The Mughal nobility had lost its old vigour, valour and glory. In the seven bloody battles of succession fought between Aurangzib's death in 1707 and Muhammad Shah's accession in 1719 had perished quite a large number of princes, nobles, generals and soldiers. Add to this rivalry among nobles which led to the liquidation of officers and warriors. This loss was further aggravated by frequent fights with the Marathas, Rajputs, Jats and Sikhs. The deficiency so arising could not be made up by the birth of worthy successors in the imperial family, or by the rise of able men from amongst the masses, or by the arrival of promising new recruits from abroad. In a word, the process of degeneration which had begun in the life-time of Aurangzib reached its climax about the middle of the eighteenth century.

Apart from the scarcity of worthy leaders in war and administration there were other factors also which weakened, and sometimes immobilized, the imperial machinery, such as jobbery, corruption, carelessness and inefficiency. Incapable governors were appointed in the frontier provinces through sheer favouritism, the garrisons were depleted and neglected, and so the whole structure of frontier defence became awfully rotten. This brought about the catastrophes which placed the Mughal emperors at the mercy of foreign invaders, deluged the proud imperial capital more than once in the blood of its citizens, despoiled it of valuable treasures, rent away several provinces, divested the central authority of all respect and prestige, and precipitated the final and complete dissolution of the empire.

UNDEFENDED AFGHANISTAN

The only vulnerable point in the boundary of the Mughal empire (apart from the coastal provinces which were exposed to the naval power of the European trading nations) was the north-west frontier, which in those days extended to the Hindukush. On the strict control and good government of Afghanistan depended the stability and prosperity of the empire. During the reign of Muhammad Shah, when the forces of disintegration and decay were let loose, the administration of Afghanistan was in the hands of an indolent and negligent governor named Nasiri Khan. He spent his time chiefly in hunting and praying, and cared little for proper management of his charge. Neither the frivolous emperor nor his sycophant ministers cared to take any interest in the affairs of this most vulnerable province of the empire. Roads and passes were left unguarded; and the local officers had lost all fear of authority. The tribal subsidies were withheld. The revenues of the province being much less than the expenditure, the central government had to pay a large sum to balance the budget; but the payment of this subsidy was frequently delayed. The salary of the army fell into arrears, and the soldiers who had not received any money from 1733 to 1738 clamoured for even one year's dues in order to pay their creditors. The army was, therefore, in a sad state of discipline, poorly fed, poorly armed, and poorly equipped. Whenever Nasiri Khan's agent in Delhi pressed for payment of arrears, the prime minister gave the following reply: "Do you think that I am such a petty simpleton as to be impressed by a tale like this? Our houses are built on the plains; we do not fear anything except what we can see with our own eyes. Your houses stand on lofty hills, and therefore you have probably sighted Mongol and Qizilbash armies from the roofs of your houses! Tell your master that we are writing for money to the governor of Bengal; and when the Bengal revenue arrives after the rainy season the money due will be quickly sent to Kabul."¹ Naturally "the subahdar sought his own comfort and lived at Peshawar,² entrusting the fort of Kabul to a *oi'adar* with orders to control and watch the passes leading into India".³

According to the gross law of nature this chaotic and miserable state of the Mughal empire attracted its stronger and fiercer neighbours to plunder the hoarded treasures of the richest capital in Asia. Nadir Shah of Iran, a soldier of fortune, a man of great ambition, fierce valour, indomitable energy, and extraordinary ability, both

1 Anandram Mukhlis, *Taskira*, 11-12.

2 Peshawar was then included in the subah of Afghanistan.

3 *Siyār-ul-mutak̄kharīn*, I, 94.

military and political, was the first to be tempted to direct his attention to this virtually undefended gold mine.

RISE OF NADIR SHAH

The story of Nadir Shah's rise to power has few parallels in history. Born in a poor Turkoman family of Khurasan in 1688, he passed his boyhood in extreme penury and privation. To keep his body and soul together he turned a robber. His genius for leadership and his bold exploits won him many companions, and he soon came to command a large band of hardy and adventurous followers. At this time Iran was passing through a gradual process of dissolution. Khurasan was lost to it. Qandahar was seized by the western Afghans in 1717, and Iran was occupied by them in 1722. Their leader captured the Shah of Iran and usurped the throne. The seven-year rule of the Afghans in Iran was a period of great horror and atrocities, within this period "nearly a million of her inhabitants had perished, her fairest provinces had been rendered desert, and her proudest edifices levelled with the dust, and this by enemies who had neither the force nor the wisdom to maintain the conquest".⁴

Nadir was fired with national enthusiasm and unbounded ambition. The Afghan monarch of Iran was threatened by Peter the Great of Russia and the Sultan of Turkey. Nadir made successful headway against all the three enemies. Peter the Great died in 1725; the Russians were checked, Nadir having concluded peace with them. The Turks were completely routed. He then defeated the Afghan ruler of Khurasan, and recovered Qandahar also. His military genius eventually succeeded in expelling the Afghans, and gradually regaining the whole country. He then restored the old dynasty of the Persian kings; the new ruler Shah Tahmasp showed his gratitude by granting Nadir half of his dominions with a richly jewelled crown and the right of coining money.

The Afghan menace was still alive: the displaced conquerors were making every effort to recover their lost power. When Nadir was away in the eastern provinces to quell agitation, the Afghans defeated Shah Tahmasp and compelled him to make a humiliating peace. This caused widespread indignation against the king and unlimited enthusiasm for Nadir. With one voice the people urged him to assume the crown for himself.⁵ Shah Tahmasp was deposed in 1732. Nadir declined to sit on the throne and proclaimed Abbas, an eight-month-

⁴ Malcolm, *History of Persia*, II, 2-5.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 8-11. Anandram, 34.

old son of Tahmasp, as king, himself acting as regent with full authority. Four years later the baby-king died, and Nadir succeeded him with the title of *Shahanshah* Nadir Shah on 26 February 1736.

NADIR SHAH'S MARCH TO INDIA

Nadir Shah made conquests in all directions, and rose to be the greatest Asiatic general of his time. The Mughal government of India, out of sheer pride of its ancestry, offended this man of blood and iron, simply because he was of low origin. No greetings were offered to him on his accession to the throne of Iran in accordance with the normal usage prevailing at that time. On the other hand, there were indications of positive unfriendliness on the part of the emperor. Nadir Shah occupied the fort of Qandahar, a strong citadel of the hostile Afghans, after a protracted siege in March 1738. During this campaign swarms of Afghans poured into the Mughal province of Kabul and thence migrated to India, the most notable of them being the Ruhelas. Nadir Shah could not tolerate the safe asylum offered to his foes. He sent envoy after envoy emphasizing with increasing urgency and imperiousness that they should be expelled from their place of refuge immediately; but no heed was paid to these requests, and his messengers were detained on flimsy grounds. At last Nadir Shah lost his patience and directed his envoy in India to return at once. In May 1738 he crossed the Mughal frontier into northern Afghanistan and occupied Ghazni without resistance, the Mughal governor having fled away. Within three weeks, (19 June 1738) he occupied Kabul and seized the imperial treasury, horses, elephants and stores.⁶ Leaving Kabul in July he proceeded through Jalalabad to Peshawar where he reached on 18 November after routing Nasiri Khan's raw levies in the Khaibar pass.⁷

The next stage was Lahore. Crossing the Indus in December Nadir encamped five miles east of the city of Lahore on 10 January 1739. Zakariya Khan, the subahdar of the Punjab, put forth whatever resistance he could without aid from Delhi. After initial success in preventing the Persian troops from entering the city he found resistance useless and submitted to the invader.⁸ Although the city was required to pay a contribution of 20 lakhs, Nadir Shah retained Zakariya Khan in his office, took as hostages his son Shah Nawaz Khan and Dalpat Rai, son of his diwan Lakhpat Rai, and made straight for Delhi. He reached Sirhind on 5 February, Raja Sarai (modern Raipur) the next day, Ambala on the 7th, and Shahabad on the 8th. He was at

⁶ Mirza Muhammad Mahdi, *Tārīkh-i-Jahānkushā-i-Nādirī*, 333-35.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 341-42. 'Ali Hazin, 290.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 344. Anandram, 23. 'Ali Hazin, 293.

Thaneswar on 10 February and at Sara'i 'Azimabad on the 11th. Karnal, where the imperial army lay encamped, was only 12 miles away.

The Punjab, deserted by its imperial master, suffered terribly during the invader's triumphal march. His troops plundered and ravaged without mercy. To quote a chronicler: "Cities like Wazirabad, Yaminabad, Gujrat, etc. and big villages (each like half a city) were reduced to black ashes. All over the land property was plundered and women outraged."⁹ Internal law-breakers raised their head. A chronicler who was an eye-witness writes, "The whole province was in complete revolution. Every person put forth his hand to plunder and pillage, and some thousands of robbers beset the public roads. The whole of that time, whether on the road or at the (halting) stations, passed in fighting and contention."¹⁰

BATTLE OF KARNAL

The Delhi court had come to know of Nadir Shah's approach when he had occupied Kabul, but for more than five months no energetic steps were taken to resist his progress. On 2 December the emperor ordered his three highest nobles Itimad-ul-daulah Qamr-ul-din Khan (the wazir) Nizam-ul-mulk Asaf Jah (the vakil or regent) and Samsam-ul-daulah Khan Dauran (the Amir-ul-imari and Mir Bakhshi) to oppose the invader. A sum of one crore of rupees was granted for their expenses. Farmanas were sent to the Rajput rulers, including Sawai Jai Singh of Amber, to come to the emperor's aid; but they did not respond. The emperor even appealed to Peshwa Baji Rao who promised to send a force but did not do so¹¹

The imperial generals, divided by party and personal interests, were incapable of taking prompt and concerted action. The emperor's confidence was enjoyed by Khan Dauran and his Hindustani party; the Turani party, led by Nizam-ul-mulk, was eclipsed. The imperial forces started from Delhi in January 1739 and remained encamped outside the city for a month, every day expecting the news of either Nadir's defeat or his withdrawal. But on hearing the news of the fall of Lahore it was decided to wait for the enemy at Karnal. On the way to Karnal the generals were joined by the emperor.

At Karnal the imperial forces encamped over an area about 12 miles in circuit, dug trenches, and built a wall placing numerous pieces of artillery round the camp. The Mughal army had many

⁹ Anandram, 16, 21 (J. N. Sarkar's translation in Irvine's *Later Mughals*, II, 333.)

¹⁰ 'Ali Hazin, 292 (J. N. Sarkar's translation in Irvine's *Later Mughals*, II, 334.)

¹¹ Rajwade, VI, 130.

advantages over the enemy, such as superiority of position, numbers, artillery and cavalry. The strength of the Indian fighting forces was about 75,000, but the total population in the camp was nearly a million. Thus there were twelve non-combatants to one fighter. Nadir Shah's army is estimated at 55,000 horse. His camp contained 160,000 men, of whom about one-third were servants, but they were also mounted and armed, and took part in defending their camp and in plundering the enemy.¹²

The canal of 'Ali Mardan Khan flowed to the east and close to the town of Karnal. Muhammad Shah entrenched his camp along the western bank of the canal and just to the north of the town wall. Between Sara'i 'Azimabad and the royal camp there was a dense jungle. Thus the front and the right of Muhammad Shah's camp were naturally protected. The imperial army was divided into four parts. The Nizam was in front facing the north, Khan Dauran in the right or east, the wazir Qamr-ud-din in the left or west, and the emperor in the centre.

Nadir Shah's troops arrived at Sara'i 'Azimabad on 11 February 1739. They reconnoitred the country up to the borders of the imperial camp. In view of the nature of the country and the disposition of the Indian army the invader shifted his camp from Sara'i 'Azimabad across the canal to the level plain a little to the north of Kunjpura within sight of the Jamuna. In this way he assured for himself plentiful supply of water, avoided the front of the royal encampment which was strongly protected, and made himself capable of cutting off the line of communication of the imperialists with their capital. His purpose was to have a battle on ground chosen by himself or to march to Delhi while the imperialists remained entrenched at Karnal.

While leaving Delhi Muhammad Shah had summoned Sa'adat Khan, the Nawab of Avadh, to his assistance. In response to his master's appeal Sa'adat Khan marched at the head of 20,000 horse, artillery and other war material. He reached Delhi on 7 February, and stayed there only for a day. On the 12th at midnight he arrived at the imperial camp. His baggage train was left behind by one day's march, and was not sufficiently guarded. Sa'adat Khan waited on the emperor next morning, and then a council of war was held to discuss the plan of action. Just then the news was brought that Nadir's advance-guard had fallen upon Sa'adat Khan's baggage train, and were driving away 500 laden camels. This infuriated the Khan, and he begged for permission to fight the Iranis instantly. The Nizam opposed this proposal on the ground that the Khan's troops were

¹² J. N. Sarkar in Irvine's *Later Mughals*, II, 337-38.

extremely fatigued after one month's hard and continuous marching and needed rest badly. Besides, as it was one o'clock in the afternoon, it would take them more than an hour to organize their troops, and only about three hours' daylight would be left for fighting. Khan Dauran also supported the Nizam declaring that the imperial army had not been warned to get ready, and so it would take pretty long to organize itself in battle array. But Sa'adat Khan would listen to nothing and pressed for rescuing his camp followers. He sent a message to his troops to assemble for the fight, and himself hastily went out at the head of a thousand horse and a few hundred foot. Later he was joined by 4,000 cavalry and 1,000 infantry only, because his tired soldiers did not take the message seriously for want of previous intimation.

This was 13 February. Early that morning Nadir Shah, without knowing what was going on in the imperial camp, had ordered his army to march out in three divisions. After moving about for a couple of hours he took up his position three miles east of the imperial camp, and two miles west of the Jamuna. At about 2 o'clock in the afternoon he suddenly noticed Indian troops coming out of their camp.

The Irani skirmishers lured Sa'adat Khan away from his position by a pretended flight. Having advanced for about two miles he sent his men requesting the emperor for succour. Muhammad Shah ordered Khan Dauran to advance. He immediately started on an elephant without assembling all his troops and taking the artillery with him; he was ultimately joined by about 8,000 horse. After a while the emperor with the wazir also marched out, and both stood on the canal bank merely as spectators without participating in the struggle. Thus the imperial army was divided into three divisions, Sa'adat Khan forming the right, Khan Dauran the centre and the emperor left. In the absence of a common plan of operation and unity of command the three divisions were separated from one another by a distance of about a mile. Besides, there was no cohesion, no order and no discipline in the Indian army; the best part of it under the emperor lay inactive at a time when the fate of the Mughal empire was being decided.

Nadir quickly organized his troops with a view to finishing his work before nightfall. Leaving a strong division to guard his camp, he placed the vanguard under his own command and the centre under his son Nasrullah. Three thousand of his best soldiers, divided into three sections, were kept in ambush. Two contingents of 500 swift riders each were sent against Sa'adat Khan and Khan Dauran in order to draw them further away from their camp. Then at the head of 1,000 of his chosen body-guard he marched into the field to direct

the fighting. The Persian artillery consisted of swivel guns, seven or eight feet long, resting on a prong, and long swivels, firing one or two pound balls, each mounted on a camel, which lay down instantly on command. To frighten the elephants in the Indian army Nâdir Shah adopted a peculiar device. A wooden platform was fastened between two camels and naptha and combustibles were placed on it to be set fire to; the camels were then driven towards the elephants.

It was after one o'clock that the battle between the rival parties commenced with the discharge of showers from both sides. Sa'adat Khan was drawn towards the ambushed artillerymen by a pretended flight, and then he was assailed on all sides by a heavy shower of balls and bullets. The Indian cavalry, chiefly trained in swordsmanship, was no match for the spears and missiles of the enemy and a large number of soldiers fell under the murderous fire of the enemy. Sa'adat Khan was defeated and captured. Khan Dauran offered opposition for a little longer, but volley after volley of thick gunfire greatly thinned his ranks. The wily Nizam, out of rivalry, did not move an inch to help either Sa'adat Khan or Khan Dauran and wished for the destruction of both. The emperor with the major part of the imperial artillery stood without sending even a single soldier to the assistance of his two generals. Khan Dauran was mortally wounded in the face and was removed to the royal camp in an unconscious condition.

On the fall of these two leaders fighting on the Indian side ceased; the struggle had lasted for about three hours. Muhammad Shah expected an attack; but Nâdir Shah cleverly avoided fighting with such a strong force, and ordered an indiscriminate slaughter of Indians who were fleeing pell-mell. In the battle about 8,000 men were killed on the Indian side, and after the fighting was over nearly 12,000 more men were slaughtered. On the Persian side the loss was about 2,500 slain and twice as many wounded. An immense booty fell into the hands of the victors; nothing was left in the camps of Sa'adat Khan and Khan Dauran. The emperor retired to his camp at sunset and the Indians spent a sleepless night, as their entire camp was besieged by the enemy.

Among the causes of the defeat of the Indians may be mentioned the imbecility of the emperor, rivalry and jealousy among Indian military leaders, absence of a supreme commander capable of co-ordinating plans and troop movements, wretched state of military organization, absence of any plan of action, lack of discipline, inferior methods of fighting, inferior weapons, and reliance on elephants. The Indian Muslims looked down upon fighting with muskets and prided on sword play. The best gunners in the Mughal army were

Hindus of Buxar and Allahabad and Bundela Rajputs. The Indians did not employ portable light artillery, but mostly used heavy guns which were fixed at one place and could not be fired accurately.

S A ' A D A T K H A N ' S T R E A C H E R Y

At nightfall Nadir Shah retired to his camp and at 8 o'clock summoned Sa'adat Khan to his presence. The Persian conqueror spoke contemptuously of Indian troops, saying that they were fond of dying rather than fighting. Then he enquired about the emperor's plans and resources. Sa'adat Khan replied that only one noble of the emperor was defeated; but there were many more with innumerable hosts ready for the fight. Nadir Shah asked him to suggest ways and means of getting a large ransom so that he could return home immediately. Sa'adat Khan informed him that the Nizam was the only person who could settle terms of peace on behalf of Muhammad Shah. Nadir Shah thereupon sent a noble to call the Nizam to the Persian camp; he carried a copy of the Holy Quran to take an oath on it that no treachery was meant. The Nizam came and discussed the matter at length. Nadir Shah agreed to return immediately for a sum of 50 lakhs, 20 lakhs to be paid on the spot and 10 lakhs each at Lahore, Attock and Kabul.

Khan Dauran, the head of the imperial army, died of his wounds on 15 February. This high office was coveted both by the Nizam and Sa'adat Khan, but on a previous occasion the Nizam had promised his full support in obtaining this post for Sa'adat Khan. The Nizam learnt of the Mir Bakhshi's death on his return from Nadir's camp; and immediately requested the emperor to give him the high office as a reward for his diplomatic service. Muhammed Shah at once conferred the post on him. On hearing of the Nizam's appointment as Mir Bakhshi Sa'adat Khan was stung to fury on account of the Nizam's breach of promise and the ingratitude of his imperial master; he made up his mind to ruin both. He told Nadir Shah that he had at the Nizam's persuasion accepted an insignificant amount as indemnity. He incited the invader to march to Delhi for seizing its immense wealth, assuring him that from the capital alone he would be able to realize 20 crores in cash, jewels and other costly material.

Nadir Shah listened to this tempting advice and intensified his investment of the imperial camp so strictly that nobody could come in or go out of it. He posted guards on all the roads going to Delhi; every straggler was cut down. The result was that the imperialists began to suffer from starvation. Nadir Shah then called the Nizam to his camp on 22 February, and told him that as the Delhi government had failed to fulfil the terms of peace, he would now accept

nothing less than 20 crores. The Nizam pleaded inability to pay this huge sum. He was detained in the Persian camp as a prisoner. Muhammad Shah was then invited to the Persian camp; he found no escape and reached Nadir's camp on 24 February. He was not received by anybody of position and was admitted to the Nizam's apartment. All the nobles who had accompanied the emperor were declared as captives. The following day the family, servants and furniture of the emperor as well as of all the nobles, together with the imperial artillery, were transferred to the Persian camp; minor officers and soldiers in the imperial camp were ordered to go to Delhi or return home. The vast camp of the Mughals broke up, but few escaped in safety as most of them fell victims to the greed of either Nadir's soldiers or of the people of the neighbouring areas who were bent on enriching themselves.¹³ Thus Nadir Shah destroyed all chances of any further resistance on the part of the Mughal army. The Maratha agent at the Mughal court, who left the camp at Karnal on 25 February, wrote, "The Chaghtai empire is gone, the Irani empire has commenced."¹⁴

NADIR SHAH IN DELHI

Nadir Shah despatched to Delhi Sa'adat Khan as the representative of Muhammad Shah and Tahmasp Khan Jala'ir as his own plenipotentiary. They carried letters from both the sovereigns to Lutfullah Khan, the governor of the city of Delhi, ordering him to surrender the city and the citadel to the Persian envoy. Lutfullah handed over the keys of the fort, treasures and the palaces on 27 February. The two rulers left Karnal for Delhi on 1 March. Muhammad Shah was followed by 1,000 horse and the wazir Qamr-ud-din by 10,000; the rest of the soldiers had fled to their homes. They reached the Shalamar Garden, north of Delhi, on 7 March and were received by Sa'adat Khan and Lutfullah Khan. Muhammad Shah retired to his palace on the 8th to receive Nadir Shah. On the 9th the Persian monarch marched from the garden. His route was lined by Persian soldiers up to the gate of the fort palace. Muhammad Shah spread the richest cloth of gold and carpets and lodged him in Shah Jahan's palace-chambers. The Persian soldiery was quartered partially near the fort, some on the bank of the Jamuna, and the rest in private houses throughout the city. Sa'adat Khan was threatened with severe punishment if he did not raise the

13 Battle of Karnal and incidents immediately following Mughal defeat: Anandram, 25, 27, 29, 35-36, 42; Khwajah 'Abdul Karim Kashmiri, *Bayān-i-wâqâ'i*, 32, 34, 43-44; *Jahânkushâ*, 346, 348-49, 351, 353-54; Shakir Khan, *Tâzâkîra*, 40; *Siyâr*, I, 96-98.

14 Rajwade, VI, 181.

promised sum of 20 crores soon. To escape disgrace he took poison and died in the night.

On 10 March—the day of the great Muslim festival Id-uz-zuha—the conqueror, after completion of the afternoon prayer, addressed himself to the task of devising ways and means of collecting 20 crores. He appointed men to prepare lists of all the treasures in the palace. Just about that time, at 4 o'clock, some idlers and vagabonds of the city spread a false report that Nadir Shah had been treacherously murdered by the orders of Muhammad Shah. The man on the street did not care to verify the truth. The fort gates were open, and people were freely going in and coming out. No noble came forward to confirm the truth, and it looked as if the entire establishment of the governor of the city had been paralyzed. As a consequence the Persian soldiers, who were moving about in the city in twos and threes in a leisurely manner, were attacked by men of low classes and cut to pieces. This slaughter continued throughout the night, and about 3,000 Persians were killed.

At the news of the butchery of his men Nadir Shah flew into a fury, and resolved to revenge himself fully upon the inhabitants of Delhi. On the morning of 11 March he repaired to the Golden Mosque of Raushan-ud-daulah, situated in the middle of Chandni Chowk. There he tried to find out in which wards his men had been murdered. He then unsheathed his sword and holding it in his hand ordered for a general massacre of the people in those areas and wherever the body of a slain Persian was found. His orders were obeyed with the greatest alacrity; the soldiers rushed to these places, plundered all the houses indiscriminately, killed all men, young and old, captured women, and set fire to the houses. Horror and crime worse than murder were perpetrated everywhere. The massacre continued with unabated fury from 9 o'clock in the morning till 2 o'clock in the afternoon. Then Muhammad Shah made a piteous appeal through the Nizam and the wazir to Nadir Shah to show mercy to his people. Nadir Shah granted the emperor's request, and sent the kotwal with his men to stop his soldiers' destructive activities. The soldiers immediately obeyed him. The areas affected by this massacre were Chandni Chowk, Dariba Bazar, fruit market square, area round the Jama Masjid and Paharganj. According to another authority, this area extended from the gate of the fort northwards to the wood market, southwards to the outside of the Delhi Gate and westwards to the old *Idgah* including Paharganj. The rough estimate of the people slain was put at about 20,000. Besides, a large number of women and young girls drowned themselves in wells, while some were killed by their guardians to save them from brutal treatment at the hands of the Persians. After the mas-

sacre the city was placed in a state of siege. Nobody could enter or go out. All the granaries were sealed. Many people died of starvation and disease. The neighbouring country within a radius of 30 to 40 miles was desolated.

Then began systematic exactions from the emperor, his nobles and the people of the city. Muhammad Shah was made to surrender all the crown-jewels, including the celebrated Koh-i-Noor and the world famous Peacock Throne which was profusely decorated with magnificent jewels, valued by Tavernier, himself a jeweller, at 16 million sterling. The entire cash in the public treasuries and the hidden stores concealed in the inner vaults was seized. The nobles and other rich men were compelled to disgorge their accumulated wealth. Terror, dejection and shame appeared on every face from the emperor in his palace to the poorest labourer in his hovel. The wazir Qamr-ud-din was made to stand in the sun, and compelled to pay one crore of rupces in cash besides a quantity of rare jewels and many elephants. His diwan Majlis Rai was tortured and one of his ears was cut off in the open darbar. Unable to bear the insult, he committed suicide on 8 April. The Bengal governor's representative at the court of Delhi was beaten. Overwhelmed with feelings of shame and humiliation he took poison along with his entire family.

As for the general public, it was ordered that every citizen should pay an indemnity of half the value of his property. The whole city was divided into five wards, placed under the Nizam, the wazir, Azimullah Khan, Sarbuland Khan and Murtaza Khan separately. The Persian noble Tahmasp Khan Jalair was appointed to supervise their work. A large number of accountants and clerks, accompanied by footmen of the city kotwal and Persian military police, went from house to house and prepared lists of property in each. The house-master was summoned to a law court to get the assessment of his contribution settled; all persons, rich and poor, high and low, were compelled to wait there day after day from early morning till late at night. After the amount was fixed, pressure was put upon everyone to make the payment immediately. Delay meant insult, torture and even death. The floors of the houses were dug in search of buried hoards. In two wards under the Nizam and the wazir the people escaped suffering, as both of them paid a large amount on behalf of many who were too heavily assessed. In the three remaining wards, particularly in that of Sarbuland Khan, terrible atrocities were perpetrated on the people. Whole families perished under the effect of torture or at their own hand. In the realization of taxes "no barbarities were left unpractised".

The total amount of exactions from Delhi was estimated by Nadir's

secretary at 15 crores in cash, besides a vast quantity of diamonds, jewels, ornaments, cloths, carpets and other costly material. Frazer put the grand total at 70 crores. Anandram, secretary to the Indian wazir, computed the whole lot at 60 lakhs of rupees and several thousand gold coins, gold to the value of one crore of rupees, jewels and diamonds including the Koh-i-Noor, as also the Peacock Throne, all worth 50 crores. In addition, the invader carried away 800 elephants, 10,000 horses and 10,000 camels. The human tribute included a princess, a daughter of Dawar Bakhsh, the grandson of Murad and the great-grandson of Shah Jahan, who was married to Nadir's younger son Nasrullah on 26 March. The whole population of the Persian empire was given benefit of the Indian loot, as the revenue for three years was completely remitted. The army chiefs were liberally rewarded and the soldiers received 18 months' wages, six months' salary as their arrears, the same amount in advance, and six months' salary as a free gift. Each camp-follower was paid 60 rupees as wages and 100 rupees as reward.

Nadir Shah stayed in Delhi for nearly two months. During this period coins issued in his name became current, and at Friday prayers his name was mentioned as sovereign of India. The provincial governors accepted him as their suzerain. Muhammad Shah and his nobles lived as prisoners of state. The Persian conqueror enjoyed Indian music and dances.

On 1 May Nadir Shah held a darbar and conferred on Muhammad Shah the empire of India excluding the trans-Indus territory consisting of Afghanistan, the north-western regions and Sind which were annexed to his own dominions. Four districts of the Punjab east of the Indus—Gujrat, Aurangabad, Pasrur and Sialkot—were also taken possession of by Nadir; but these were to be managed by the Mughal subahdar of the Punjab, and 20 lakhs of rupees were to be remitted as annual tribute. He enlisted in his service and took to Iran 130 accountants and expert financiers, 300 masons, 200 blacksmiths, 200 carpenters and 100 stonemasons to build a city like Delhi in his country, as also a number of goldsmiths and boat-builders.

The nobles were instructed to obey the emperor. The conqueror withdrew his own coins, ordering Muhammad Shah's name to appear again on coins and in prayers.

Nadir Shah left Delhi on 5 May, and laden with the richest treasures of the greatest empire in the east, marched homeward by way of Narela, Sonepat, Panipat and Karnal. The peasantry of the neighbourhood attacked his rear and flanks and plundered some of the property which was being carried away. Before reaching Thaneswar he

lost about 1,000 animals—horses, mules and camels—laden with booty. This enraged Nadir and he ordered a massacre of the people of some of the towns and villages on the way. From Sirhind he turned to the north in order to avoid the sweltering heat of the plains, and skirting the foot of the hills reached Akhnur on the Chenab on 25 May. The river had considerably risen on account of the early rains and the melting of snow, and the bridge of boats prepared by Nadir was smashed by the current, carrying off 2,000 soldiers. He procured some boats with great difficulty, and after a halt of 40 days managed to cross the river at Kaluwal on 3 July. In the course of his journey through the Punjab, Zakariya Khan, the Mughal subahdar of the province, was constantly in attendance upon him. Nadir Shah was so pleased with his service and loyalty that he offered him any favour he desired. Zakariya Khan requested him to release the Indian captives, and thousands of women were set free. Then by way of Hasan Abdal, Peshawar and Kabul, Nadir returned to his country.¹⁵

RISE OF AHMAD SHAH ABDALI

Nadir Shah's easy victory was a complete exposure of the military, political and moral decay which had been steadily paralysing the Mughal empire for the last several decades. The 'disgrace, spoliation and dismemberment' which the empire suffered in 1739 were merely symptoms—and not causes—of the decline which had set in long before the Persian invader's blow. "He broke the spell under which men had been regarding a gorgeously dressed corpse as a strong man."¹⁶

As the spell was broken and the corpse was incapable of resurrection, it was natural that the pagoda tree should invite other spoliators. Nadir Shah was murdered on 9 June 1747. His mantle fell on an Afghan empire-builder named Ahmad Shah Abdali who repeated his master's exploits with equal zeal, capacity and violence by invading India as many as ten times.

Ahmad belonged to the Sadozai branch of the Abdali tribe of the Afghans although he came to be known as Durrani on his coming to power. He was probably born in 1722. In the late thirties of the eighteenth century Nadir Shah allowed the Abdalis to settle in Qandahar and Herat. Ahmad was taken into Nadir's service as an orderly officer. He was a brilliant young man who won the confidence of his master, and was promoted to the post of treasurer officer. At the time

¹⁵ Anandram, 38-41, 44, 50-51, 53-54, 80-88. *Jahānkushā*, 355, 357-59, 361-65. *Rayān*, 46-47, 53, 58-57. Raiwade, VI, 131, 133, 167. Hanway, *The Revolution of Persia . . .*, II, 372-73, 376, 384.

¹⁶ J. N. Sarkar in Irvine's *Later Mughals*, II, 903.

of Nadir's invasion of India he was in charge of his master's personal contingent of 6,000.

During the crisis following Nadir Shah's murder Ahmad Abdali displayed conspicuous fortitude, prudence and energy. He organized troops, plundered the treasure and camp of Nadir, and acquired a large booty including the famous diamond Koh-i-Noor. Elected to leadership by an assembly of Afghan chiefs, he assumed sovereign powers and took steps to establish an Afghan national monarchy cut off from Persia in response to the wishes of the Afghan tribes.¹⁷ Shah Vali Khan was appointed his chief minister, Jahan Khan commander-in-chief and Shah Pasand Khan chief of the army.

The next step was the occupation of Qandahar which was followed by coronation in July 1747. Ahmad assumed the title of Shah in addition to that of *Durr-i-Durrān* which he had assumed after his election to leadership. His mastery over the Afghans could not be completed without the assertion of his authority over Ghazni and Kabul. He opened negotiations with Nasiri Khan, the governor of Kabul, promising him confirmation in his post if he agreed to pay an annual tribute of 5 lakhs. Nasiri Khan retired to Peshawar and fortified the passes leading to India. Ahmad Shah marched from Qandahar, took Ghazni on the way, and captured Kabul after a nominal struggle. He then invited the tribal chiefs to him for help in establishing the power of the Afghans. Many of them responded to this national call, apparently allured by the prospect of plunder. Having considerably strengthened his position he advanced towards Peshawar. Abdus Samad Khan, the chief of Peshawar deserted Nasiri Khan, and joined Ahmad Shah Abdali at Jalalabad. Nasiri Khan felt dismayed and fled to Lahore and then to Delhi where he received honours from Muhammad Shah for his loyalty to the Mughal empire (December 1747). Peshawar fell into the hands of the invader.¹⁸ Ahmad Shah became supreme in the country lying between Herat and the Indus and acquired a convenient base for future operations. This was a vast territory but not sufficient for his ambition which dragged him through Nadir's route of victory to India, the land of gold and slaves for the north-western conquerors.

ABDALI'S FIRST INVASION (1747-48)

The motives of Ahmad Shah for invading India may easily be explained. The Afghans possessed a turbulent nature and a keen spirit of rivalry; and if their energies were not diverted to something which

¹⁷ Malleson, *History of Afghanistan*, 273-74. Ibn Muhammad Amin Abul Hasan, *Muimil-āt tau āīkh ahd Vādliyā*, 20-21, 74-75.

¹⁸ Anandram, 300 2. *Bayān*, 224.

could strike their imagination, they would create disturbances and plan rebellions. Ahmad Shah could maintain his newly founded kingdom only by waging foreign wars, particularly against a rich country, as "gold in Afghanistan is, more than anyone else, the god of the human race".¹⁹ Hence war was a necessity to him. Elphinstone's explanation²⁰ is comprehensive :

"For the consolidation of his power at home he relied in a great measure on the effects of his foreign wars. If these were successful, his victories would raise his reputation, and his conquests would supply him with the means of maintaining an army, and of attaching the Afghan chiefs by favour and rewards: the hopes of plunder would induce many tribes to join him, whom he could not have easily compelled to submit: by carrying the great men with his army he would be able to prevent their increasing, or even preserving their influence in their tribes; and the habits of military obedience would prepare them for a cheerful submission to his government at home; the troops also, having the king constantly before their eyes, and witnessing the submission of their hereditary chiefs, would learn to regard him as the head of the nation: and he might hope, as the event proved, that his popular manners, and the courage, activity, vigilance, and other military virtues which he possessed, would impress all ranks with respect, and strongly attach his soldiers to his person."

Afghanistan and the North-West Frontier Province of the present century had ceased to be parts of the Mughal empire as a result of Nadir Shah's invasion. By making himself master of Kabul and Peshawar Abdali completed the recovery of the Persian heritage. Beyond his boundary lay the Mughal territory of the Punjab which became his immediate target.

Zakariya Khan, who had been governor of the Punjab at the time of Nadir Shah's invasion, died in 1745. His two sons, Yahiva Khan and Shah Nawaz Khan, were appointed governor respectively of Lahore and Multan. The two brothers quarrelled regarding the division of their father's property. After a brief civil war Shah Nawaz Khan occupied Lahore and placed Yahiva Khan in confinement. As the usurper apprehended intervention from Delhi (the imperial wazir Qamr-ud-din Khan was Yahiva Khan's father-in-law), he sent an invitation to the Abdali to invade India. The chief adviser of Shah Nawaz Khan was Adina Beg Khan, the faujdar of his jagir in the Jullundur Doab. This crafty politician played a double game: while advising Shah Nawaz to seek foreign aid, he reported his secret cor-

¹⁹ Ferrier, *History of the Afghans*, 286.

²⁰ Elphinstone, *An Account of the Kingdom of Caubul . . .*, II, 283-84.

respondence to Delhi. The wazir, in his anxiety to avoid the Abdali's intervention, secured the emperor's approval of the appointment of Shah Nawaz as governor of Lahore and sent him a conciliatory letter reminding him of the loyalty of his family to the Mughal emperors. Elated at this mark of imperial favour Shah Nawaz decided to play the role of Delhi's faithful servant.²¹

Meanwhile Ahmad Shah had accepted Shah Nawaz Khan's invitation and left Peshawar at the head of an army about 18,000 strong (December 1747). Advancing to the fort of Rohtas without any opposition he sent his *pir*, Sabir Shah, to Lahore. Shah Nawaz Khan was offended by his remarks during an interview. Expecting assistance from Delhi and knowing that the Abdali had no field artillery with him, the youthful viceroy at once ordered him to be put to death by pouring molten lead into his nostrils.²²

After this outrage the invader could not think of conciliation. He continued his march, and arrived at Shahdara on the right bank of the Ravi on 8 January 1748. The route followed by him was marked by plundered and burning villages. The Ravi was crossed on 10 January, and the Abdali encamped in the Shalamar Garden four miles east of the city of Lahore.

The battle between the opposing troops took place on 11 January. Shah Nawaz posted his troops at two places, in the small fort of Hizrat Ishan (saint Mian Mir) and in an entrenchment near the hermitage of Shah Baladil. These two divisions numbering 16,000 rushed upon the enemy in the open plain in front. The Abdali sent only a detachment of one thousand mounted musketeers, who galloped at full speed discharged their guns simultaneously, and quickly returned to their encampment. The second detachment followed them immediately and acted similarly. In this way the battle continued till evening, when the Indian troops considering the fighting to be over began to retire to their camps pell-mell. The Abdali taking advantage of this situation ordered all his troops to attack them furiously. This caused complete confusion in the Mughal ranks, and they fled to take refuge under the city wall. Shah Nawaz found his position untenable, at midnight he left the city and fled to Delhi. Thus Lahore fell into the victor's hands. The Afghans plundered the outskirts and suburbs, particularly Mughalpura, but spared the city for a ransom of 30 lakhs. Abdali secured the major portion of this ransom at once as also the wealth of the governor. Moreover, he seized the imperial artillery

21 Anandram, 235, 258. *Siyār*, 861-62. *Bayān*, 131-32. *Shāh Nāma-'t-Ahmadiyā*, 73-75

22 *Bayān*, 225. Anandram, 326.

and military stores in the fort. He was now fully prepared to march to Delhi.²³

The Delhi court had learnt no lesson from the discomfiture during Nadir Shah's invasion. His massacre, rapine and outrage were soon forgotten by the demoralized nobility who had lost all sense of honour. Muhammad Shah was an embodiment of indolence and carelessness. During the past 25 years of his rule he had gone out of his capital only twice. His pleasure lay chiefly in opium-eating and debauchery. Following the example of their master the court nobles also put before them the enjoyment of wine and women as the goal of life. That pleasant pursuit they would not give up, though the invader with characteristic Afghan ferocity and violence was knocking at the gates of the country. They were stirred only when Lahore had fallen.

A huge army consisting of 60,000 men and accompanied by numerous attendants, all numbering more than 200,000 souls, moved out of the imperial capital under the nominal command of the crown prince Alam Shah, but the wazir Qamr-ud-din Khan was to direct the operations. The imperialists arrived at Sirhind on 25 February, when they found to their dismay that the fort had been deserted by Ali Muhammad Ruhela to avoid fighting with his tribesmen. The wazir left heavy baggage, surplus stores and women (including his own harem) in the fort with a garrison of 1,000 horse and foot, and marched to the river Sutlej. Instead of crossing it by the direct route at Ludhiana he decided to ford it at Machhiwara, 22 miles above. He left no guards on the Ludhiana road, took no steps to gather intelligence about the enemy's whereabouts and did not maintain communication with Sirhind. Such was the degeneration of military efficiency in India in that age.

The Abdali, who was ruthlessly agile and well-informed about the Indian army's movements, left Lahore on 19 February, reached the Sutlej opposite Ludhiana on 1 March, and captured Sirhind on the next day. He slew the garrison, seized all the war material, reduced the women to slavery, and sent treasures and surplus stores to Lahore to be conveyed to Afghanistan. The road to Delhi was clear to the invader and he could make a dash on the imperial capital, but he preferred to try his strength at Sirhind. The imperialists returned and encamped at Manupur, 10 miles north-west of Sirhind, where they took up an entrenched position. They had the advantage of heavy artillery and the sheer weight of their numbers. Some of the local chiefs, such as Jamal Khan of Malerkotla, Rai Kalha of Jagraon, Ala Singh of Patiala and Adina Beg Khan rendered valuable service to

²³ Anandram, 312, 325-32. Bayān, 227.

the imperial cause by cutting off the supplies of the enemy. The irresolute wazir delayed fighting until his food supply was exhausted. The Abdali had brought a large gun from Lahore. This he mounted on a hillock situated in the plain lying between the two armies, overlooking the camp of the chief minister, and started bombarding the imperialists. The wazir was thus compelled to fight.

BATTLE OF MANUPUR

On 11 March the wazir, who was about to lead the army for a general attack, was struck by a ball in his tent, where he was reciting religious verses after the late morning prayer; he expired a short while after. His son Muin-ul-mulk delivered the assault. The Mughal army was divided into five divisions, each consisting of about 12,000 men. The vanguard consisted of Turks in the service of the wazir and now led by Muin. Behind it were the right wing and the left wing. The former consisted of the Iranis and Purbias of Avadh under the command of Safdar Jang. The left wing consisting mainly of 20,000 Rajputs was in charge of Ishwari Singh, the son and successor of Sawai Jai Singh of Jaipur. The rear-guard was commanded by Nasiri Khan, the refugee governor of Kabul. The baggage train was placed behind the centre. The vanguard was protected in front by a strong park of artillery.

While leaving for the Punjab Ishwari Singh had asked for the cession of the fort of Ranthambhor as the price of his assistance, but this request was turned down by the emperor. The raja, therefore, decided to remain only a half-hearted ally of the imperialists. At Manupur the news of the wazir's death had leaked out to him, and he decided to desert. In the beginning of the battle he suddenly left the field with all his troops without striking a blow. Abandoning his heavy baggage and throwing his guns into wells, he fled to Jaipur. This created a gap on prince Ahmad's left, and the Abdali's right wing inflicted heavy losses on the Mughals; but Nasiri Khan managed to repel their attack. The thickest contest raged in the centre. Muin's skin was grazed, his brother was shot in the foot, Adina Beg was twice wounded, and many officers of note were slain. In the meantime the right wing under Safdar Jang was faring well. The Afghans were firing long swivels from a hillock opposite. Safdar Jang ordered 1,700 of his musketeers to dismount, attack the Afghans and dislodge them from their position of advantage. This plan was well executed, and the enemy was driven away with heavy losses. The Abdali's troops tried to recapture the hill, but they were beaten back. At this time it was reported to Safdar Jang that the centre was hard pressed.

He immediately despatched reinforcements to the prince, and put his artillery and troops between Muin-ul-mulk and the Abdali. The latter was immediately attacked by a volley of murderous fire. Just then the Abdali's stores of rockets caught fire. The sparks set fire to the gunpowder of the field artillery, killing about a thousand Afghans on the spot. Ahmad Shah retired, leaving the Indians master of the field.²⁴ He had already received the news of the rebellion of his nephew, Luqman Khan, at Qandahar.

The imperialists took no advantage of their victory; they remained inactive for five days, stirring out of their trenches when the Abdali had gone far away towards Afghanistan. The prince reached the Sutlej on 21 March, and allowed his troops some time for rest. On 9 April a letter came from Muhammad Shah, recalling the prince to Delhi, and appointing Muin-ul-mulk the viceroy of the Punjab.

ABDALI'S SECOND INVASION (1749-50)

This victory of the Mughals had no deterring effect on the Abdali who again invaded the Punjab in the following year. It was necessary for him to restore his military reputation and political prestige. The appointment of Mir Mannu at Lahore was a threat to the Abdali's hold on the frontier region (including Peshawar) and even on Kabul. The new governor put Nasiri Khan in charge of the Chahar Mahal (the districts of Gujurat, Aurangabad, Pasrur and Sialkot) which had been taken over by Nadir Shah and promised him aid in recovering the lost province of Kabul. Ahmad Shah could not pursue his plan of conquering Herat while his rear remained exposed to the aggressive activities of the Mughal governors.

Muhammad Shah died soon after the battle of Manupur and was succeeded by his only son Ahmad Shah, a young man of 22, born of a dancing girl who had been made queen. Brought up in want and carelessness, he knew nothing about the art of government. In conformity with the palace tradition he turned out to be the worst type of voluptuary. The new imperial wazir, Safdar Jang, was neither a good general nor a statesman, what was worse, he looked only after his own interest and cared little for the interest of the empire.

With such a weakling on the throne, and the nobles sunk in their usual indolence and mutual jealousy, the situation in India was naturally tempting to the ambition and ruthlessness of the Afghan conqueror. He set off from Qandahar in the beginning of the cold weather of 1749 and crossed the Indus by the middle of December.²⁵

²⁴ Anandram, 313-15, 322-24, 333-37, 339, 343-77. *Mujmūl*, 101-12. *Bayān*, 228, 232-35. *Tārikh-i-Ahmad Shāhi*, 6b-9a.

²⁵ For the view that the Abdali's second invasion took place in 1748-49 see Ganda Singh. *Ahmad Shah Durrānī*, 73-74.

The Abdali's direct antagonist was Muin-ul-mulk who, as the governor of the Punjab, was the warden of the marches in the north-west frontier. He was strong and energetic; but he had a powerful antagonist in Safdar Jang, the leader of the Iranian party, who was determined to weaken the position of the Turani nobility. The wazir manipulated Shah Nawaz Khan's appointment as subahdar of Multan and instigated him to seize the governorship of Lahore. Muin sent his army to Multan, defeated and expelled Shah Nawaz, and installed his loyal general Kaura Mal as governor there. Safdar Jang was also responsible for instigating Nasiri Khan to rise against Muin-ul-mulk. The Sikhs had begun to create troubles for the Mughal viceroy.

Notwithstanding these difficulties, Mum-ul-mulk resolved to oppose the invader single-handed. Leaving Lahore with whatever force he could gather he encamped at Sodhara, four miles east of Wazirabad on the Chenab. Meanwhile the Abdali also had reached there and halted on the opposite bank. He asked Muin to assign to him the revenues of the Chahar Mahal. Muin forwarded this letter to Delhi, begging for reinforcements, and sought to gain time by prolonging negotiations. To his surprise the emperor instead of sending him any help granted to the invader the revenues asked for. Several months' skirmishes ruined the country around the camp, and Muin's Mughalia troops were showing signs of exhaustion. In view of the limitations of his own resources he concluded peace with the Abdali by handing over the royal mandate.²⁶ This arrangement left the four districts in charge of the Mughal emperor's agents. They were to be administered in his name, but "the Afghan, all the same, got the first slice of India proper".²⁷ Muin-ul-mulk realized his own weakness and would not in future place himself in opposition to the Abdali.

ABDALI'S THIRD INVASION (1751-52)

The Abdali had a good excuse for his third invasion of India: non-payment of the revenues of the Chahar Mahal in terms of the agreement of 1750. For this lapse Muin-ul-mulk was held responsible. While despatching an advance army to invade the Punjab Ahmad Shah tried to bring about an amicable settlement through negotiation. He sent Harun Khan to Lahore demanding payment of the promised revenues. Muin told him that no revenues had been collected owing to disturbances in the country (October 1751). Ahmad Shah sent another agent Sukhjiwan Mal pressing for money. Muin paid him only 9 lakhs of rupees expressing his inability to pay the full amount.

²⁶ Ahmad Shāhī, 6b, 7a, 10a, 17ab, *Bayān*, 247-49.

²⁷ J. N. Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, I (2nd. ed.), 237.

The Abdali, who had left Kabul in September 1751, received the money and continued his march towards the Punjab.

Muin sent his family to Jammu and safety, and himself crossed the Ravi to check the enemy's progress; but the Abdali cut into his rear, reached Lahore via Niaz Beg and encamped near the tomb of Shah Baladil. Muin hurried back to his capital and after some fighting entrenched himself under the city walls. The Abdali besieged the town, and the country around Lahore within a radius of about 40 miles was laid waste. The siege continued for several weeks, no reinforcements coming from Delhi to the defender of the province during this crisis. In spite of the emperor's insistence on the urgency of the case, the Irani wazir Safdar Jang took no action to relieve the Turani viceroy.

The prolongation of the stalemate created a dangerous situation for Muin's troops. His trenches became extremely unhealthy and full of foul and poisonous stench. The supply of water in the wells was exhausted, while no food or fodder were available in the city. There was no unanimity of opinion in Muin's camp regarding the action to be taken to meet this crisis. Bhikari Khan advocated peace at any cost; Kaura Mal wanted prolongation of confrontation for a month longer, declaring that the enemy would retire of his own accord on account of the approaching hot weather. Muin Khan wavered between peace and war, while Adina Beg Khan was in favour of open fighting.

It was decided to shift the camp to a better site with a plentiful supply of water, grass and fuel. The troops began to move on 5 March 1752. But they were fiercely assailed on all sides by the Afghans, for the plan had leaked out. A great confusion among the Mughal troops followed. Muin's most trusted captain Kaura Mal received no support from Adina Beg in the field and he was shot down. It is alleged that his death was due to Adina Beg's intrigue. After the shades of evening fell on the battle-field, Muin—his army broken, his artillery and ammunition lost—returned to the city of Lahore.²⁸

Next morning the Abdali invited him to a conference for settling the terms of peace. Muin fearlessly went to the Afghan camp attended by three men. He was warmly received by the Afghan prime minister and the commander-in-chief, and presented to Ahmad Shah. Struck by the young viceroy's bright appearance, daring and valour, the Shah received him courteously. The following conversation took place between the two:

Abdali: Why didn't you submit earlier?

28 Ahmad Shahi, 30a, 32. Mtskin, 13-16.

- Muin : Because I expected reinforcements from my master, the emperor.
- Abdali : Why did he not send you any help?
- Muin : Because he thought his servant could take care of himself.
- Abdali : What would you have done to me if you had captured me?
- Muin : I would have cut off your head and sent it to my master at Delhi.
- Abdali : Now that you are at my mercy, what should I do to you?
- Muin : If you are a shop-keeper sell me (for a ransom), if you are a butcher kill me, but if you are a king then grant me your grace and pardon.

The Shah was highly pleased by this reply. He embraced Muin, called him his brave son (*Furzand Khan Bahadur*), and conferred on him a robe of honour and the very turban he was wearing including the aigrette for the crest. Muin was retained in his office (subahdar of the Punjab) as the deputy of the Afghan ruler. No change was made in the administrative arrangements; only the surplus revenue was to be remitted to Ahmad Shah every year, and his approval to be obtained in important state matters. The subah of Multan also passed into the Abdali's possession. A large number of Sadozai Afghans, the fellow clansmen of the Abdali, were planted in the province with free grants of land. The Abdali then sent his envoy, Qalandar Beg, to Delhi for the formal cession of the Punjab. The emperor Ahmad Shah granted audience to the envoy on 13 April in the Hall of Private Audience, and dismissed him by putting his seal to the treaty, thus losing the most important frontier province of the Mughal empire.²⁹ While this envoy was away to Delhi, Ahmad Shah sent a strong detachment to conquer Kashmir, and appointed Sukhiwan Mal his governor of that province. He then returned to Afghanistan.

ABDALI'S FOURTH INVASION (1756-57)

Muin-ul-mulk's death in November 1753 was followed by political changes and the dissolution of administration in the Punjab. His widow, the notorious Mughlani Begam, an ambitious woman generally detested for her profligacy, put herself at the head of the provincial government as the Abdali's representative. But in March 1756 she was made a captive by the Delhi wazir, Imad-ul-mulk, who coveted the province. Already Adina Beg Khan, the saujdar of the

²⁹ Ahmad Shahī, 31b, 32a-33ab. Husain Shāhī, 25, 26. 'Umdat-ut-Tawārikh, I, 134-35. *Siyār*, Eng. trans., III, 326-27.

Jullundur Doab, had established his independent authority as far as Thaneswar. Imad-ul-mulk left him in undisturbed possession of his territory. The irrepressible Begam complained to the Abdali who used to call her his daughter. Another invitation came from Najib Khan Ruhela, the mir bakhshi of the Delhi empire, the inveterate enemy of the Marathas. In consequence the Abdali left Qandahar in the autumn of 1756, crossed the Indus at Attock on 15 November, reached Lahore on 20 December, and passed across the Sutlej on 10 January 1757.

The Delhi government was not unaware of the Abdali's intentions. His advance-guard had seized Lahore on 4 October 1756. His envoy Qalandar Beg Khan had arrived at Delhi where he was granted an interview by the emperor on 31 October. The nobles of Lahore were continually fleeing to Delhi bringing alarming reports of the impending Afghan invasion. But the wazir Imad-ul-mulk was indifferent; he would adopt no precautionary measures. The utmost he did was to appeal for aid to Najib Khan and Suraj Mal Jat, but it brought no response. Due to his incompetence and folly not a single soldier could be sent to oppose the advance of the invader; and the road to the imperial capital lay open.

Arriving at Karnal (about 12 January) the invader sent a strong detachment under Jahan Khan to plunder and lay waste the Gangetic Doab. He crossed the Jamuna and sacking Kairana, Jhanjhana, Shamli, Kandhla and Luni, and expelling Maratha officers from these places, encamped at Luni. There he was joined by Najib Khan. Foragers were daily sent out on all sides. The main army under the Abdali pushed from Karnal towards Delhi by the direct route. At Narela on 16 January he was joined by the Ruhela troops of Najib Khan; the most powerful noble at the court of Delhi threw off his mask at the most convenient moment. Sir J. N. Sarkar rightly condemns both Najib and Imad in these words: "It is impossible for the historian to apportion between Najib and Imad the responsibility for the atrocities endured by the Delhi, Mathura and Agra people during this Afghan invasion: if one was a double-dyed traitor, the other was an arrant coward; both were extremely selfish and incapable of patriotism, because India was not their *patri*."³⁰ The Abdali had brought with him about 35,000 hardy Afghan warriors. He was joined in India by 5,000 Afghans of Kasur, 12,000 Central Asian troops formerly in the service of the Mughal emperor, 11,000 musketeers then in mutiny against the wazir for non-payment of their arrears, and a large army of Najib Khan.

The prominent men of the capital had sent their families out. The wives of Hindu nobles fled to Mathura, then under Suraj Mal Jat. The

³⁰ *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, II (2nd. ed.), 66.

wazir's family had gone to Rajputana. The poor who could not afford to grease the palm of the soldiers stationed at the exits of the city to prevent their flight were compelled to stay where they were. On the arrival of the Afghans in the city the Hindus were ordered to paint their forehead as a mark of distinction from the Muslims.

In response to the Abdali's message for discussion of peace terms Imad-ul-mulk went to the Afghan camp and met the Shah on 20 January. He confessed his inability to resist the invasion by arms. He was unable to pay one crore of rupees for the privilege of retaining the wazir's post. He resigned that post; the Abdali conferred it on his rival Intizam-ud-daulah who had offered two crores for the chancellorship of a state that had no army and no treasure. Lest Imad should call his Maratha allies the Abdali made him a captive and took him in his train.

The way to Delhi was now clear. On 21 January two officers of the Abdali caused the *khutbah* to be read in two mosques, including the Jami Masjid, in their master's name. Not one theologian or scholar refused to read the *khutbah* in another prince's name while the Emperor of the Age was living in the citadel of the capital and had not been slain or made a prisoner or expelled!" The helpless emperor accepted the situation and took shelter in a few small rooms which were totally in ruin and unfit for habitation.

On 26 January the miserable emperor went to Wazirabad to welcome the conqueror who was pleased to bestow the empire of Hindustan on him and to appoint Infizam-ud-daulah as his wazir. Two days later the Abdali entered Delhi and took his residence in the palace rooms vacated by Alamgir II.

Then followed days of indescribable horror for the people of the imperial city. The rough Afghan soldiers dispersed through the main bazars of the city, looting as they went, and set fire to the rich market of Badalpura. "From that day his troops commenced plundering and sacking the city mercilessly, and they kept on dragging away people's wives and daughters so cruelly that a large number of them overborne by the delicacy of their feelings preferred to commit suicide, and God alone knows the number and nature of all other violence committed in that unfortunate city for a month."

These atrocities were followed by a systematic search of the houses of the people, the courtiers, nobles and even the imperial harem. Imad-ul-mulk was ordered to hand over all his gold and jewels. On his pleading poverty he was openly abused and his servants were severely beaten but he was saved by the intercession of the Mughlani Begam, whose daughter he had married. Then Intizam-ud-daulah was summoned to produce one crore of rupees immediately. He declared

his inability to pay anything. He was threatened to be punished by pillory and flogging. He saved his skin by saying that his mother alone knew where the buried hoard lay. The Begam was ordered to be produced instantly. "This old lady, the daughter-in-law of one grand wazir, the widow of another, and the mother of a third, was summoned and told that unless she showed the spot, iron pins would be driven in underneath the nails of her fingers. She fainted at the threat, and on recovery pointed out the room of the buried hoard. After six hours of digging by a hundred pioneers, 16 lakhs in coin, besides golden, silver and gem-studded vessels, were found under the floor."³¹ Intizān-ud-daulah's women were stripped of everything. No noble was spared spoliation, Mughlani Begam giving information as to the worth of each courtier. The citizens of Delhi were deprived of all their riches, and thousands of men and women lost their lives under torture. Hira Nand Jauhri, the prince of jewellers, was reduced to beggary.³²

After squeezing Delhi, Ahmad Shah left the capital on 22 February^{*} and marched southward. His objective was to realize tribute from the Jat chief, Suraj Mal. The fort of Ballabhpur was captured on 27 February. At this place the Abdali ordered his soldiers to carry fire and sword in all the Hindu villages, granting a free gift of the booty to the soldiers and offering a reward of five rupees per Hindu head. In accordance with these instructions the Afghans issued out in search of slaughter and rapine. Ghulam Hasan Samin who was present in the Afghan camp says³³ that they left the camp at midnight. One horseman took ten to twenty horses each attached to the tail of the horse in front. They came back at about 9 o'clock in the morning. All the horses were loaded with booty, girl captives and boy slaves were placed on them. Several hundred captive men carried on their heads bundles of several heads. All these heads were heaped before the chief minister's tent, where they were counted and the soldiers were paid five rupees per head. At the time of reckoning the heads of male captives who were made to grind corn were also cut off. "Daily did this manner of slaughter and plundering proceed. And at night the shrieks of the women captives who were being ravished deafened the ears of people."

In addition to the Afghans, 5,000 Ruhelas under Najib Khan were taking full advantage of the situation in playing the jackal. Though born and bred in India they remained non-Indians, and proved themselves to be the worst enemies of their Indian neighbours. "Each of

³¹ J. N. Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, II (2nd. ed.), 72.

³² *Tarikh-i-Alamgirī Sāmī* 80-102, 104-105b. *Delhi Chronicle* Husain Shahī 36-37. SPD, XI, 99, 104, 118, XXVII, 144.

³³ English translation of his narrative by W. Irvine in *Indian Antiquary*, 1907

them procured from 30 to 40 buffaloes, plundered only costly goods such as jewels, gold, silver, fine clothes, rugs, carpets, boys and girls, loaded the booty on these animals, established a market of their own in the Abdali camp, and sold these articles at low prices. Copper and other vessels that had been broken up were strewn along the route of the army and no one stooped to pick them up."

Ahmad Shah despatched his commander-in-chief Jahan Khan and Najib Khan at the head of a strong force of 20,000 to devastate Mathura, Brindaban and other places. His orders were: "The city of Mathura is a holy place of the Hindus; . . . let it be put entirely to the edge of the sword. Up to Agra leave not a single place standing." Jawahir Singh, Suraj Mal's son, advanced to check the invaders with 10,000 men, and engaged them in a deadly battle at Chaumuha, eight miles north of Mathura, on 28 February. After the day's fierce fighting in which about 12,000 men fell, Jawahir Singh was compelled to retire by the sheer force of the enemy's superior numbers. The victors then entered the holy city of Mathura and committed the most awful atrocities on the defenceless people. Men, women and children were massacred with the wildest brutality and young women were raped in the open. Houses were destroyed by fire; temples were demolished and desecrated. "Idols were broken and kicked about like polo-balls by the Islamic heroes."³⁴

An eye-witness writes: "Everywhere in lane and bazar lay the headless trunks of the slain; and the whole city was burning. Many buildings had been knocked down. A naked man emerged from the ruins and asked me for a little food. I gave him some money and asked, 'Who art thou?' He said, 'I am a Musalman, I was a dealer in jewellery, my shop was a large one. In addition to precious stones and engraved and mounted goods, I had 4,000 rupees in cash in the shop. On the day of the slaughter the Shah's army suddenly appeared, when nobody had the least expectation of them; it was at dawn. A horseman, drawn sword in hand, came at me and tried to kill me. I said I was a Musalman. He said, 'Disclose your privates'. I undid my cloth. He continued, 'Whatever cash you have give to me that I may spare your life.' I gave him my 4,000 rupees. Another man came and cut me on the stomach with his sabre. I fled and hid in a corner. My shop was emptied. For several days past I have had nothing to eat, but a few uncooked grains of corn. Camp followers come in day after day and knock down the houses. In many places buried treasure is discovered and carried off . . . When I reached the bank of the Jamnah, I found it was fordable. The water flowing past was of a yellowish-

colour, as if polluted by blood. The man said, 'For seven days following the general slaughter, the water flowed of a blood-red colour. Now fourteen days have elapsed, and the colour of the water has turned yellow.' At edge of the stream I saw a number of *Bairagi* and *Sanyasi* huts, huddled close together. These men are ascetics of the Hindu faith. In each hut lay a severed head with the head of a dead cow applied to its mouth and tied to it with a rope round its neck. The Afghans then marched to Brindaban; but Najib with his Rohilla troops stayed behind for three days more, plundering and burning, and carried off many beautiful females as captives."³⁵

The same ghastly scene was enacted at Brindaban on or about 6 March. Ghulam Hasan Samin wrote after a visit to the holy city: "Wherever you gazed you beheld heaps of the slain; you could only pick your way with difficulty, owing to the quantity of bodies lying about and the amount of blood spilt. At one place we reached, we saw about two hundred dead children lying in a heap. Not one of the dead bodies had a head . . . The stench and effluvia in the air were such that it was painful to open your mouth or even draw a breath. Everyone held his nose and stopped his mouth with his handkerchief while he spoke."

Ahmad Shah was marching behind Jahan Khan, sacking and slaying the people in villages along the main route. On 15 March he crossed the Jamuna to the east at Mathura and sent a detachment to attack Gokul, 12 miles south of the city and on the opposite bank of the river. This place was inhabited by 4,000 Naga ascetics, all of whom with their naked and ash-smeared bodies fought desperately outside the village. Nearly 2,000 men on each side lost their lives. The Abdali was then assured that inside the place there was neither money nor maids, and so he withdrew his troops to his camp at Mahavan, six miles south-east of Mathura. Gokulnath, the presiding deity of Gokul, was saved.³⁶

Agra had provided refuge for many rich men from Delhi. The Abdali expected a heavy contribution from this city. Jahan Khan raided Agra on 21 March. There was some resistance. A part of the city was plundered and about 2,000 persons killed. On 23 March Jahan Khan retreated to join his master's camp.

The work of destruction was complete. "From Agra to Delhi not a man was left in any hamlet. Along the route by which the Abdali has come and gone back not two seers of grain and fodder can be had." There was hardly any exaggeration in this report in a Marathi

35 Nur-ud-din, 15b.

36 Rajwade, I, 63

letter.³⁷ Nature came to the rescue of the unfortunate inhabitants where the rulers of the country had miserably failed in their duty. The water in the Jamuna was at its low ebb. Its course was choked with dead bodies. The Afghans had to drink the polluted water of the river. Consequently cholera broke out in the Abdali's army, carrying off about 150 men daily. No medicine was available. A drink made of tamarind provided relief, but a scer of tamarind cost Rs 100. No wonder the Abdali's soldiers clamoured for going home.

Ahmad Shah was forced to retreat. He recalled Jahan Khan and Najib Khan from Agra, and was joined by them on 24 March. Brindaban was again sacked. Delhi was reached on 31 March. He stayed in the capital, secured a tribute of girls from the imperial palace, and ransacked the city again. The Abdali married his son Timur Shah to the emperor's daughter Gauhar-un-nisa. He himself forcibly took into wedlock Hazrat Begam, a sixteen-year old daughter of the late emperor Muhammad Shah. "This tender lamb was pounced upon by a fierce Afghan of grandfatherly age, whose two ears had been docked and nose was rotting from a leprous carbuncle."³⁸ The weeping bride was accompanied in exile out of India by Malika-i-Zamani and Sahiba Mahal, the widows of Muhammad Shah, 16 other ladies of the imperial harem and 400 maid servants. His generals and officers took away the beautiful wives and daughters of many court nobles. The humbler captives, several thousands of young boys and girls, captured by the Afghan soldiers to be taken home, were set at liberty at the entreaties of Alamgir II.³⁹

The Afghan booty from India was enormous. The Abdali's own goods were loaded on 28,000 camels, elephants, mules, bullocks and carts. In addition, 200 camel-loads of property were taken by Muhammad Shah's widows who accompanied him. Of 80,000 horse and foot following him, each man carried away spoils. His cavalry returned on foot, loading their booty on their chargers. The need for transport was so urgent that no horse or camel, not even a donkey, was left in any one's house. The guns which had been brought for taking the Jat forts had to be abandoned because their draught-cattle had to be loaded with plunder; these were taken away by the Jats.⁴⁰

The Abdali annexed the Sirhind province to his empire and placed it in charge of Abdus Samad Khan. Najib Khan, the trusted Ruhela chief, was left in Delhi as the real master of the imperial government,

³⁷ SPD, XXI, 99, 111.

³⁸ J. N. Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, II (2nd ed.), 91.

³⁹ *Tārīkh-i-Ālamgir Sāmī*, 109b-111b, 112ab, 113a, 114b, 115a. Rajwade, I, 63.

* *Delhi Chronicle*, SPD, XXI, 98, 118; XXVII, 152.

⁴⁰ SPD, II, 71.

although Imad-ul-mulk retained the office of wazir. His son Timur Shah was appointed as the viceroy of the Punjab with Jahan Khan as his deputy. After completing these arrangements Ahmad Shah returned to Afghanistan.

ABDALI'S FIFTH INVASION (1759-61) :

BATTLE OF PANIPAT

Timur Shah was in nominal charge of the Punjab for one year, from May 1757 to April 1758. As he was only eleven years old the administration was carried on by Jahan Khan. The Afghan general was a seasoned warrior but a poor administrator. He established military rule and directed his attention chiefly to the collection of revenues. He harshly treated Adina Beg Khan, the crafty governor of the Jullundur Doab, as also the Sikhs, who had become bold enough to plunder the suburbs of Lahore. Anxious to expel the Afghans from the Punjab Adina Beg invited the Marathas to advance into the province, offering them one lakh of rupees for every day of marching and half that amount for each day of halt. Raghunath Rao, who was then near Delhi, accepted the terms.

The Maratha invasion of the Punjab began early in March 1758. A vast army, led by Raghunath Rao and Malhar Rao Holkar, advanced into the Punjab and was joined by Adina Beg with his troops and a hired force of Sikh free-booters. Sirhind fell after a short resistance. On the approach of the Marathas towards Lahore Timur Shah and Jahan Khan evacuated the capital and retreated to Afghanistan (April 1758).

Meanwhile Najib Khan had been driven out of Delhi by the Marathas (September 1757) who later on besieged him at Sukartal, about 16 miles due east of the city of Muzaffarnagar (June-December 1759). Hard pressed by the Marathas, he repeatedly sent urgent messages to the Abdali saying: "All this misery has been inflicted by the infidel Marathas on all our people. You are the emperor of Muslims. It is your duty to remedy this affair." Najib won over most of the Indian Muslim nobles, took written undertakings from them, and forwarded all such letters to the Abdali, who was not only a king and conqueror but also an Afghan, sympathetic to the Ruhelas. The Abdali promised to come to India in winter and do what was due to Islam'. He could not acquiesce in the loss of the Punjab and the removal of his faithful Ruhela ally from Delhi.

With an army of about 60,000 horse Ahmad Shah left for India in the autumn of 1759, and arrived at Lahore in October. On his approach the Maratha general Sabaji Sindhia fled towards Sukartal with-

out striking a blow. The entire province of the Punjab was thus left to the Abdali. After organizing his government at Lahore he proceeded *via* Sirhind where he reached on 27 November. The Maratha general Dattaji Sindhia raised the siege of Sukartal on 8 December and crossed the Jamuna near Panipat on 20 December. Here he got the news that the Abdali's vanguard under Jahan Khan, Shah Pasand Khan and Abdus Samad Khan was at Chhat Banur, 16 miles north of Ambala city, and that they were advancing, foraging the country for about 30 miles on either side of the road. Dattaji divided his army into two bodies, and at the head of 25,000 chosen troops—lightly equipped—advanced towards the enemy. A sharp engagement took place with the advance-guard of the Abdali on 24 December near Taraori in which the Marathas were defeated. Dattaji fell back towards Delhi. Immediately after the battle the Abdali crossed the Jamuna at Buriya-ghat and entered the Gangetic Doab. Najib Khan, starting from Sukartal, joined him near Saharanpur. Together, they marched down the east bank of the Jamuna towards Delhi. On the way the other Afghan chiefs such as Hafiz Rahmat Khan, Dundi Khan, Sadulla Khan and Mulla Sadar joined the Abdali with their troops.

Najib Khan, leading his own Ruhelas and supported by the Abdali's contingents, quietly crossed the Jamuna at Barari-ghat, 10 miles north of Delhi, on 9 January 1760, and suddenly fell upon the Marathas. Dattaji was slain, his nephew Jankoji was wounded, and the Marathas were completely routed. The Abdali, instead of entering Delhi, encamped at Khizarabad, south of the city, on 14 January and despatched letters to the Rajput princes and Suraj Mal Jat, demanding tribute and personal attendance. They hated the Marathas so much that most of them would have responded to his call had there been no fear of the Afghan's fabled treachery; moreover they were afraid that after his departure from this country they would be left to the Marathas' vindictive fury. So they prolonged negotiations and bided their time.

In February 1760 the Abdali invested the Jat fort of Dig, marched into Mewat and proceeded to Rewari. A Maratha force under Malhar Rao Holkar was routed at Sikandrabad, 36 miles south-east of Delhi, by Jahan Khan on 4 March. The Abdali then encamped near Aligarh for the hot weather and the rainy season. The crafty Najib Khan was deputed to Lucknow to win over Shuja-ud-daulah who was still undecided. Ahmad Shah saw the great importance of securing the co-operation of the premier Muslim ruler of north India. Najib carried on negotiations most adroitly, and Shuja joined the Abdali with 30,000 horse and 10,000 foot.

Meanwhile the Peshwa had sent a large army from the Deccan under the nominal command of his eldest son Vishwas Rao. The actual control was entrusted to his cousin Sadashiv Rao Bhau, a young man of 30 who as a strategist and tactician was not incompetent. The Marathas crossed the Narmada on 12 March 1760 and captured Delhi on 3 August. They were not prepared to consider the terms of peace offered by the Abdali through Hafiz Rahmat Khan: recognition of the Punjab as Afghan territory and guarantee of Najib Khan's possessions in the Gangetic Doab.

Leaving Naro Shankar in charge of the capital the Bhau marched to Kunjpura where the Afghans had built a strong fortress garrisoned by 10,000 troops. This place commanded the ferry over the Jamuna and formed a half-way house between Sirhind, the Abdali's outpost on the east, and his camp in the Gangetic Doab. This was the robber's den where Afghan marauders and freebooters stored their booty and found an asylum. It was occupied on 17 October. An immense booty was captured: horses, camels, guns, huge quantities of wheat, and a large amount of cash.⁴¹

The loss of Delhi and Kunjpura was too much for the Abdali. He crossed the Jamuna at Baghpat, 20 miles north of Delhi, on 24 October, and arrived at Sonepat. The Bhau started from Kunjpura for Kurukshetra on 25 October. On his way he got the news of the Abdali's arrival at Sonepat where the Afghans would be able to cut off his communication with Delhi and the south. He turned back to meet the enemy and reached Panipat on 29 November. Two days later the Afghan army was sighted seven miles south of his position.

From the military point of view the Abdali had several advantages. The Bhau's camp extended over about six miles in length and two miles in breadth including the city of Panipat within his defences. The selection of such a site was a blunder, for the vast majority of the population of the town was Muslim, and therefore hostile to the Marathas. His camp was enclosed by a ditch 60 feet wide and 12 feet deep and his guns were mounted on the parapet. The Abdali defended his encampment by an abatis and trenches. The discipline in the Afghan army was far superior to that in the Maratha camp. The Afghans were prepared to submit to strict discipline and severe punishment. The Maratha officers and soldiers, on the other hand, were 'temperamentally averse' to organized discipline and team work. Besides, the Bhau's capricious and overbearing temper caused disaffection and, to a certain extent, passive insubordination of several of his chiefs and their followers.

⁴¹ SPD. XXI, 192, 193, 198. *Husain Shahi*, 57. *Nur-ul-din*, 34-35.

Both sides tried to cut off each other's supplies. The grain for the Afghan camp came from the Gangetic Doab. The Bhau ordered Govind Ballal to seize Najib Khan's estates, sack the homes of the Rulelas, and even to threaten Avadh. Govind Ballal marched from this headquarters at Etawa with 10,000 men, chiefly rustic levies. He himself was above 60, too fat to ride easily, and all his life had served in the revenue department. He plundered some places on his way till he reached Shahdara opposite Delhi. There his troops were routed, and his head cut off, by a detachment sent by the Abdali. This exploit closed the supplies of grain and money from the Doab to the Marathas, and assured them to the Afghans. Money was sent by Naro Shankar from Delhi; but Govind Ballal's death closed the road to the Doab. Gradually the Maratha supply of food, fodder and money was completely exhausted. The soldiers and cattle grew lean; horses began to die daily by the hundred.

The rival armies lay encamped at Panipat for about two months and a half, frequently skirmishing. The suffering in the Maratha camp reduced the Bhau to a sad plight and he opened negotiations for peace through Hafiz Rahmat Khan and Shuja-ud-daulah. The Afghan chief minister, Shah Wali Khan, was inclined towards making peace for a large sum of money, but in the council of the Shah it was Najib Khan who reigned supreme. He was the most inveterate foe of the Marathas. So the peace proposals were rejected.

At last starvation and stench (caused by thousands of dead bodies as also by the evacuation of lakhs of living beings) made the Maratha soldiers impatient for action. The Bhau decided to fight. Early on the morning of 14 January 1761 the Marathas sailed from their camp and arranged themselves in battle array. Ahmad Shah immediately organized his troops. The right of his army was composed of a mixed body of Mughals, Persians and Rohelas. Shah Wali Khan was in the centre. On his left was Shuja-ud-daulah, to his left Naph Khan; Shah Pasand Khan was on the extreme left. By putting his own special troops on both the extremes he wedged in his Indo-Muslim allies between strong bodies of Afghan troops. The Afghan line of battle was seven mile long; it overlapped the Maratha line by about half a mile on each side. The artillery of both parties was ranged in front of their respective lines. As regards their total strength the Abdali had 60,000 regular troops and 80,000 irregulars. The Maratha army consisted of 40,000 regulars and 15,000 Pindaris, the latter being no more than a rabble. Besides, the Maratha leaders were no match for the Abdali in generalship. The Bhau had no worthy captain in his army; while in the camp of his opponent there was a galaxy of military stars such as Shah Wali Khan, Jahan Khan, Shah Pasand Khan,

Haji Karim Dad Khan, Atai Khan and Najib Khan, each of whom was a match for the Bhau himself.

The Marathas fought the great battle with wild but futile gallantry. The Abdali's eagle eye scanned each critical phase of the conflict; his unfailing judgment devised remedies for each emergency. The Afghan army strained every nerve in repulsing each attack. The Abdali's swivels played in full force. The battle ended disastrously for the Marathas. Among those who fell in the field were Vishwas Rao and the Bhau.

After the defeat began the retreat; the Marathas fled in all directions. The Afghans, Mughals, Ruhelas and Avadh troops fell upon them and got busy in slaying, plundering and enslaving. After the butchery of the actual combatants another massacre took place in the Maratha camp, where according to the estimate of Kashiraj, an eye-witness, half a million men, women and children were present. Most of them were cut to pieces in cold blood by the ferocious Afghans. Cash and jewellery beyond calculation fell into the hands of the victors. "Every trooper of the Shah brought away ten, and sometimes twenty camels laden with booty." Peshwa Balaji Baji Rao got the news of the disaster at Bhilsa on 24 January. Within six months he expired.

After the greatest victory of his dazzling military career Ahmad Shah, bedecked with Koh-i-Noor and other precious diamonds, visited to tomb of Bu Ali Qalandar at Panipat to offer thanksgiving to God. He left for Delhi and reached there on 29 January. He stayed at the capital for about two months. This time again the Shah plundered the nobles, and his troops squeezed the people. He left for Afghanistan on 22 March. While passing through the Punjab he was constantly harassed by the Sikhs until he reached Attock.

Before leaving Delhi the conqueror left instructions that Shah Alam should be recognised as emperor, Imad-ul-mulk reappointed wazir, and Najib installed as mir bakhshi. Shah Alam could not return to Delhi before 6 January 1772. Imad could not seize authority. Najib became the *de facto* ruler of Delhi and regent of the empire, occupying that exalted position for a decade.

What the Abdali now wanted in India was direct rule over the Punjab from the Sutlej westwards and an annual tribute of 40 lakhs payable by the Mughal minister holding the regency of Delhi. He wanted no further struggle with the Marathas. Indeed, he sought enduring peace with them and repeatedly instructed his Delhi agent, Yaqub Ali, to conciliate the Peshwa. In 1764 a formal peace was made between the Abdali and the Peshwa.⁴² This was hardly of

⁴² SPD, XXIX, Introduction, p. 1.

any practical importance at that time, for the Marathas did not challenge the Abdali's position in the Punjab and he—in his turn—did not obstruct the recovery of their power in those north Indian regions where they concentrated their interest in the post-Panipat period.

The Abdali's later invasions were directed against the Sikhs who frustrated his favourite plan of converting the Punjab into an integral part of his Central Asian empire. How the khalsa thwarted the military power of the conqueror of the Marathas will be narrated in a later chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

AVADH UNDER THE NAWABS

(1722-1772)

THE DECLINE OF the Mughal empire in the early years of the eighteenth century was followed by the establishment of a number of independent provincial dynasties. The Mughal subah of Avadh extended from the foot of the Himalayas in the north to Manikpur safkar (district) of the Allahabad subah in the south, and from the river Karmanasa and the Bihar subah in the east to the Kanauj district in the west. It comprised an area of nearly 62,100 square miles. This big and prosperous province became virtually independent of Delhi from September 1722, when a Persian adventurer named Mir Muhammad Amin, entitled Saadat Khan, was appointed its governor by the titular emperor Muhammad Shah.

SAADAT KHAN'S EARLY CAREER

This soldier of fortune was descended from an illustrious Sayyid family of Naishapur in Khurasan. Born in or about 1680, he came to Patna in 1708-1709 and then went to Delhi. In July 1710 he entered the service of Sarbuland Khan, faujdar of Kara Manikpur in the Allahabad subah. After serving there for about two years and a half he went to Delhi and entered Farrukh-siyar's service in 1713. In 1719 he was appointed by Muhammad Shah faujdar of Hinduan and Biyana in the Agra subah. In recognition of his services against the Sayyid brothers the emperor gave him the title of Saadat Khan Bahadur and appointed him subahdar of Agra (October 1720). He served in that capacity till he was transferred to the subah of Avadh in 1722.

A tradition dating obviously from this very time still lingers in Avadh and shows how by a clever trick Saadat Khan secured himself from the fear of arbitrary transfer or dismissal to which governors of provinces were then subject owing to shifts in party politics at the imperial court. While leaving Delhi he mounted his elephant with his face towards its tail. When questioned regarding this curious

impropriety, he replied that he was looking towards the capital to see whether his successor was being despatched behind him. The hint was enough. His partisans at the court secured the emperor's assurance of the security of the tenure of the Khan's new office. Thus fortified, Saadat Khan resumed his march, gathering on the way information about the internal politics of the province and making new helpful friends.

B A R O N S O F A V A D H

Avadh in the eighteenth century was a land of semi-independent feudal barons of varying degrees of wealth, strength and political importance. The most notable among the chiefs were Mohan Singh, raja of Tiloi in the present Rai Bareli district, the rajas of Bansi, Rasulpur and Binayakpur in Basti, Chhatradhari Singh Sombansi of Pratapgarh, Chait Rai Bais of Baiswara, Datta Singh of Gonda and Narain Singh of Balrampur (Gonda district). There were numerous other chieftains of lesser importance and a considerable number of petty zamindars, who, too, like their more powerful brethren, had acquired virtual independence in the management of their internal affairs during the weak rule of Aurangzib's successors. Every zamindar of consequence had erected a strongly built brick or mud fortalice (*garhi*), usually in an inaccessible village surrounded by a belt of dense forest, and had his own contingent of troops besides his civil establishment, which were limited only by the extent of his financial resources. His despotic authority over his subjects was diluted by the presence of many rivals around him and by the fact that, owing to meagreness of his own resources, he had to seek and depend upon the armed assistance of his people, in times of emergency, against the encroachment of the provincial government. Interdependence between the landed chiefs and their subjects made their relations so intimate that political intrigue could hardly succeed in sowing dissensions among them. But there was a feeling of rivalry among the landed chiefs, which could be exploited by any clever politician of rank.¹

C O N S O L I D A T I O N O F S A A D A T K H A N ' S A U T H O R I T Y

With the help of the shaikhs of Kakori (about 7 miles south-west of Lucknow) who were at feud with their more powerful neighbours, the shaikhzadas of Lucknow, Saadat Khan struck his first blow at the latter and occupied Lucknow, the virtual capital of the province, as the result of a carefully planned night attack (1722).² After this

1 See Butter, *Topography and Statistics of Southern Oudh* (1839).

2 *Tārīkh-i-Sawānīhāt-i-Sulṭān-i-Avadh*, 7a-8a.

initial success he proceeded to consolidate his position by augmenting his army and by distributing patronage to weaken the shaikhzadas. His wise policy of conciliation, based on the principle of recognition of the rights of the existing barons, induced most of them to submit. But a few bold spirits, the most prominent among whom was Mohan Singh of Tilo, chose to defy the new governor who, while confirming the barons in the possession of their estates, would not tolerate any private wars among them. Mohan Singh was defeated and slain in battle, fighting bravely to his last breath (1723). Saadat Khan's reputation was now generally established and his authority was everywhere respected. His well-organized and firm administration increased the revenues of the province and earned for him the title of Burhan-ul-mulk.³ But the province remained parcelled out as before amongst a powerful landed aristocracy, only partially subdued, paying their annual revenue at the point of the bayonet and trying to take every advantage of the difficulties and distractions of Saadat Khan and his successors. His credit lay in keeping the powerful chiefs thoroughly in check, without exterminating them, and in maintaining order in the province.

Saadat Khan had, after his signal success at Lucknow, established himself on the bank of the Saraju (Ghaghra) at a distance of two miles from the ancient town of Ayodhya. There he built residential quarters for his family and followers, which became popularly known as *Bangala-i-Faizabad*. It became the new capital of Avadh and gradually developed into a prosperous city which in the time of his grandson almost vied with Delhi in population and magnificence.

Saadat Khan strove hard to convert his subah into a virtual kingdom and rule it in practical independence of Delhi. By clever diplomacy and, failing that, by conquest he enlarged the boundaries of his estate by adding to it several fertile districts in the east and south-west. The state of Banaras (comprising the sarkars of Mirzapur, Ghazipur, Banaras and Chunargarh which roughly represent the modern district of Banaras including the territory of the maharaja of Banaras, the districts of Ghazipur, Azamgarh and Ballia and the eastern half of Mirzapur) was incorporated in Avadh in or about 1728. This was done by peaceful negotiations with Murtaza Khan, a nobleman of Delhi, who held it in assignment.⁴ Thus the eastern frontier of the subah was pushed to the present limit of modern Uttar Pradesh in that direction. In 1729 the acquisition by artifice of the state of Sachendi (12 miles south-west of Kanpur) from a Rajput chief named Hindu Singh Chandela extended the western boundary

3 'Imād-us-Sa'ādat, 8.

4 *Balwant Nāma*, Sab, 9a.

of Avadh to the close vicinity of the city of Kanauj;⁵ while the conquest in 1735 of the modern district of Fatehpur (Kora Jahanabad) from the valiant Bhagwant Singh Khichar completed the expansion of the subah in the south-west.⁶

Saadat Khan devoted much of his time and attention to the re-organization of the military and finance departments of his government upon which depended his own welfare as well as that of the province. The 'Sin-dagh' regiment, called after the initial letter of his name, was one of the best equipped and disciplined forces in the country. He spared no pains to make all branches of his military establishment (including artillery) as serviceable and mobile as the cumbrous eighteenth-century Indian army could be. An able financier that he was, Saadat Khan overhauled the finances of his dominions with the expert advice and co-operation of his diwan Atma Ram. He increased the revenues without rack-renting the peasantry and left a well-filled treasury to his successor.

SAADAT KHAN AND NADIR SHAH'S INVASION

Notwithstanding the fact that he identified himself with Avadh, Saadat Khan continued cherishing ardently the ambition of a ministership at the imperial court and making his influence felt throughout the country. In this he was baffled by the superior craft and successful intrigue of his more powerful rival Asaf Jah Nizam-ul-mulk, who was the head of the Turani party and, as such, hostile to the Irani party of which Saadat Khan was a notable member. Unlike Khan Dauran Samsam-ud-daulah and Sawai Jai Singh, Saadat Khan was a consistent advocate of armed resistance to the Marathas. To prevent Maratha intrusion into the Doab he inflicted a defeat on Malhar Rao Holkar near Jalesar (about 26 miles north-east of Agra) in March 1737. But this success was not accorded due recognition owing to the jealousy of the wazir Qamr-ud-din Khan and the mir bakhshi Khan-i-Dauran who were stalwarts of the Turani party. Nor was his dashing valour at the field of Karnal on 13 February 1739 against Nadir Shah properly appreciated, much less rewarded, though he had risked his all in this battle and was eventually taken a prisoner.

While in detention in the Persian conqueror's camp, Saadat Khan learnt that Nizam-ul-mulk had secured for himself the post of mir bakhshi which had fallen vacant on the death of Khan Dauran at the battle of Karnal. The Turani leader had promised to use his good offices to get Saadat Khan elevated to this coveted post. This breach

⁵ Rustam Ali in Elliot, VIII, 48-47.

⁶ *Mīrāt-ul-Wārdāt*, 221b-222b. *Hadrī-qat-ul-īqlīm*, 680. SPD, XIV, 9, 40-42.

of faith filled Saadat Khan with rage and impelled him to brush aside all sentiments of loyalty to his adopted country and his sovereign. He instigated Nadir Shah to abandon the idea of retiring on getting a modest indemnity of 50 lakhs of rupees from the Mughal emperor as promised by Nizam-ul-mulk. He told the invader that if he proceeded to Delhi he could easily have 20 crores in cash besides other valuables.

The hint was taken. Nadir Shah entered the imperial city in triumph. Saadat Khan's treachery was duly rewarded. He rose high in the conqueror's favour and was appointed *vakil-i-mutlaq* (regent plenipotentiary) by the two monarchs. But his rise was as short-lived as it was sudden. Despite heavy contributions imposed on all and sundry the promised ransom of 20 crores did not come forth. Nadir grew furious and threatened Saadat Khan with corporal punishment, unless he produced the sum within a reasonable period. His rival Nizam-ul-mulk too was similarly threatened. The two nobles conferred together and decided not to survive the disgrace. The wily Nizam-ul-mulk went to bed covering himself from head to foot but without taking poison, while Saadat Khan who was more sensitive and straightforward drank a cup of poison and died during the night of 19 March (1739).⁷

Saadat Khan was a brave and intrepid soldier and an administrator of undoubted ability. His basic qualities were restless energy and ambition, and though normally generous and grateful for favours received, he was 'regardless alike of gratitude, loyalty or patriotism' whenever these came in conflict with his cherished schemes of self-elevation and self-aggrandizement. His main achievements in Avadh were the establishment of internal peace and order, and extension of provincial boundaries. He succeeded in putting the subah well on the way of becoming a kingdom. He possessed a poetic turn of mind and sometimes composed verses under a pen-name.

SUCCESSION IN AVADH. SAFDAR JANG

Mirza Muhammad Muqim, entitled Abul Mansur Khan, succeeded his uncle and father-in-law Saadat Khan as subahdar of Avadh. He was the second son of Saadat Khan's eldest sister. Born in Persia in or about 1708, he came to India in 1723 at the invitation of his maternal uncle who obtained for him the title of Abul Mansur Khan from the emperor Muhammad Shah and appointed him deputy governor of Avadh in 1724. Saadat Khan gave his eldest daughter, Sadr-un-nisa alias Nawab Begam, in marriage to him, and having no son, treated him as his successor. His claim to succession was disputed by Nisar

⁷ Rustam Ali in Elliot, VIII, 64-65. The story that he died of 'bodily ailments' (Lahori's *Ibrat-nâma*, 395, followed in later works) is not correct.

Muhammad Khan, entitled Sher Jang, son of the deceased subahdar's elder brother Siyadat Khan, on the plea that a brother's son should have preference over a sister's son. Encouraged by his brave and talented wife Sadr-un-nisa, and loyally supported by his chief officers, Abul Mansur boldly addressed himself to the task ahead, took charge of the administration and army, and set about to secure the support of Nadir Shah who was still occupied with the congenial work of spoliating Delhi. His first tactical and decisive blow was dealt swiftly at his resourceless rival who had no territorial or family connections to back up his pretensions. Already in possession of Avadh as also of the hoards left by his predecessor, Abul Mansur won Nadir Shah's support by presenting him on 13 May 1739 two crores of rupees which included the ransom the Persian conqueror had imposed on Saadat Khan. Muhammad Shah, who was not in a position to ignore Nadir's sentiments, now issued a letter patent formally appointing Abul Mansur to the subahdari of Avadh and conferring upon him the title of Safdar Jang as also the rank and jagirs enjoyed by his predecessor.⁸

SAFDAR JANG AND REBELLIOUS BARONS

Urgent domestic problems were already demanding the new nawab's immediate attention. Saadat Khan's death in mysterious circumstances in Delhi, the presence of a formidable foreign invader on Indian soil, the virtual collapse of the central government, and the disputed succession at Faizabad combined to inspire many Avadh chiefs with the hope of seizing independent authority and withholding payment of tribute. Some of them had already entered into some kind of understanding amongst themselves, taken the law into their own hands, and subverted the authority of the nawab in the areas under their jurisdiction.

As soon as Nadir began his return march from Delhi and there remained no fear of any interference from outside, Safdar Jang proceeded against the confederate chiefs of Amethi Bandagi (14 miles south-west of Lucknow), Hasanpur, Tilo and Garh Amethi in the Sultanpur district, and Jagdishpur near Tilo. He was able to defeat and disperse them before they could combine effectively and gather sufficient strength.⁹ This swift stroke had the effect of detaching the confederates from the most redoubtable among them, the raja of Tilo, who was an hereditary foe of Safdar Jang's house and represented the most turbulent and freedom-loving Rajput family in Avadh. A powerful Mughal force, stiffened by field artillery under the personal

⁸ 'Imād, 30-31. *Delhi Chronicle*, 6.

⁹ William Hoey, *Memoirs of Delhi and Fyzabad*, II, 246-47.

command of the nawab, proceeded against Tilo where Nawal Singh had entrenched himself (1739). The fort was besieged in October 1739 and after fierce resistance lasting for many days the raja offered his submission, though only to raise his head again at a convenient opportunity.¹⁰ Safdar Jang, however, considered it politic to accept it and allow Nawal Singh to retain his fort and territory.

The third formidable rebellion which needed the Nawab's personal attention was that of Nawal Singh of Nabinagar and Katesar in the modern Sitapur district. After ten days' continuous march he arrived at Nabinagar and invested the forts which stood like two giants with a distance of two miles between them. Desperate fighting lasted for eleven days and nights during which the Mughal artillery maintained an effective fire. Nawal Singh eventually realised that he was out-matched in weapons and outnumbered in men, and that it was hopeless to continue an unequal fight. So he slipped out of the fort of Katesar (March 1741). The two forts were now easily captured by the Mughals and the nawab returned to Faizabad in triumph.¹¹ Nawal Singh seems to have tendered his submission in time and secured the restoration of his estate.

Contemporary historians writing in Persian whose theme in most cases is the history of Delhi seldom bestow even a passing glance at occurrences in the provinces unless it manifestly involved imperial interest. They write in general terms that Saadat Khan and Safdar Jang uprooted big landlords and made the country prosperous. We know, however, from provincial chronicles and contemporary letters that powerful chiefs continued to assert their claims and that it took Safdar Jang about two years to establish his authority in the subah. It may, therefore, be safely assumed that the rebellions were widespread and not confined to any particular locality. The nawab's military success, coupled with his generous policy of pacification of the barons and restoration of their territory even when they had been beaten in the field, proved helpful in the establishment of his authority. Such a policy alone was practicable in those days when, owing to an identity of interest between the peasantry and the landed aristocracy, the latter could not easily be dispossessed by a provincial governor, however powerful.

SAFDAR JANG'S BENGAL EXPEDITION

Safdar Jang was even more ambitious to play dominant role in imperial polities than his late uncle. Two years' bitter experience convinced him that for the fulfilment of his objective as well as for

¹⁰ *Mansūr-ul-Maktabat*, letter nos. 3, 27.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, letter no. 4.

the internal security of his subah a more powerful and disciplined army was a necessity. Accordingly he increased the number and efficiency of his troops, supplementing them with several hundred Qizilbashes (who were deserters from Nadir's army) and Kashmiris of mixed origin.¹²

These military improvements were well-timed. Muhammad Shah, who had for some time been thinking of setting up his foremost Irani nobles as a counterpoise against the dominance of the Turani party at the court, was impressed by the reports of Safdar Jang's strong military establishment and selected him as one of his new favourites. He was commissioned (November 1742) to proceed to the succour of Alivardi Khan, subahdar of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, who, being threatened by a Maratha invasion, sought imperial aid. Safdar Jang's request for the grant to him of the forts of Rohtas and Chunar, reputed to be impregnable, was complied with by the obliging imperial court. He marched from Faizabad at the head of a big army in December 1742 and, while on his way, occupied the fort of Chunar.

Arriving at Patna, Safdar Jang behaved like a grasping adventurer rather than an ally of the nawab of Bengal. He forcibly occupied the fort of Patna and alienated the local notables by his arrogance. Alivardi Khan had already defeated the Marathas and was no longer in need of Safdar Jang's aid. He wrote to the nawab of Avadh requesting him to go back to his own subah. He also appealed to the emperor to direct Safdar Jang to leave Patna. Meanwhile Peshwa Balaji Baji Rao was reported to be advancing from Bundelkhand towards Banaras. Afraid of the safety of his own subah Safdar Jang left Patna and set out for Avadh (January 1743).¹³

SAFDAR JANG AND RUHELKHAND

Summoned by the emperor to Delhi in connection with his plan of strengthening the Irani party, Safdar Jang reached the imperial capital in November 1743. In March 1744 he was appointed mir atish (superintendent of imperial artillery). Placed in charge of the protection of the persons of the emperor and the members of his family he took up his residence in the imperial fort. A few months later—in September 1744—he was appointed subahdar of Kashmir in addition to Avadh. He left his provinces to be governed through his deputies, Nawal Rai being put in charge of Avadh and Sher Jang in that of Kashmir.¹⁴

¹² Prominent among the Kashmiris were Shias of Zadibal, a suburb of Srinagar.

¹³ *Siyâr, Lucknow text*, II, 515-22.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, III, 515-17, 520-22. *Delhi Chronicle*, 21. 'Imâd, 34. Harcharan, 382b.

Safdar Jang was now a minister of the empire and the virtual leader of the Irani (Persian-Shia) party in India, the two senior members of this faction, namely, Amir Khan Umdat-ul-mulk and Ishaq Khan Najm-ud-daulah, having no hereditary territorial possessions with permanent revenue and military resources to back their pretensions to primacy and power. His new position pitted him as a rival to the Turani wazir Qamr-ud-din Khan. But he utilized his position and power at the imperial court to further the interests of his hereditary dominion of Avadh rather than those of the empire.

Being provoked by the predatory raids on Avadh of his neighbour, the Ruhela leader Ali Muhammad Khan of Ruhelkhand (ancient Katchr situated to the north-west of Avadh), a confirmed rebel against the empire, Safdar Jang experienced no difficulty in persuading Muhammad Shah to accept his plan of uprooting the Ruhela adventurers. Their chief was besieged in his stronghold of Bangarh, 10 miles north of Badaun, in May 1745. After a brief siege he surrendered through the mediation of the wazir Qamr-ud-din Khan, who, being opposed to Safdar Jang, secretly contrived to save Ali Muhammad from sure ruin. Bangarh was pulled down and the Ruhela chief taken as a prisoner to Delhi; but he was soon released by the intriguing wazir in whose custody he was kept, and appointed faujdar of Sirhind.¹⁵ Though unable to crush him, Safdar Jang was for some time relieved from the near presence of a grasping and hostile neighbour.

SAFDAR JANG'S PROMOTION TO WAZIRSHIP

Although the Ruhela campaign had practically failed in its original purpose and Safdar Jang had as yet no outstanding military or diplomatic success to his credit, yet Muhammad Shah, in pursuance of his favourite policy of weakening the Turani party, continued to show him special favours, drawing him every day closer to himself. In order to strengthen the bonds of friendship between Safdar Jang on the one hand and the two other leading Irani nobles—Amir Khan and Ishaq Khan—on the other, the emperor negotiated a match between his son Mirza Jalal-ud-din Haidar, later known as Shuja-ud-daulah, and Ishaq Khan's daughter, the celebrated Bahu Begam of the future. The emperor had adopted her as his daughter. He deputed Amir Khan to make arrangements for the marriage and give away the bride on his behalf. The wedding took place with great pomp and magnificence towards the end of 1745.

After Amir Khan's murder on 26 December 1746 Safdar Jang became the head of the Irani party in name as well as in fact. Of the

¹⁵ *Hadrū*, 140-41. Anandram. 204-64. *Siyār*. III, 855.

Turani leaders the wazir Qamr-ud-din Khan was immersed in sensual pleasures and Nizam-ul-mulk was awaiting his fast approaching end in the Deccan. Safdar Jang remained the only sober, well-established and powerful noble of the decaying generation at the imperial court. Much of the highly important business, such as diplomatic relations with the Marathas, was transacted through him.

In December 1747 Ahmad Shah Abdali invaded the Punjab and encountered feeble resistance. Peshawar and Lahore fell; the Afghan army proceeded towards Delhi. It was then that an imperial army, under the supreme command of the wazir Qamr-ud-din Khan, with Safdar Jang and Ishwari Singh of Jaipur as his lieutenants, was sent to meet the invader. The crown prince Ahmad joined the army on its way. A pitched battle was fought at Manpur (about 10 miles northwest of Sirhind) on 11 March 1748. In spite of an initial ill omen in the death of the wazir from an enemy cannon-ball, the Indian army fought valiantly, Mir Mannu (Qamr-ud-din's son) and Safdar Jang displaying throughout qualities of good generalship.¹⁶ The invader was defeated and obliged to flee from the field during the following night, returning to Kabul in haste.

Muhammad Shah, whose illness had taken a bad turn, did not live long to rejoice over the victory and died during the night of 15 April. Prince Ahmad, then on his way back from Manpur, carried out his enthronement on receipt of the sad news in his camp near Panipat on 18 April, promising the prime ministership to Safdar Jang, now the ablest noble available at Delhi. But he was not formally appointed to that office till 19 June, on which date he was further promoted to the rank of 8,000 zat and 8,000 sawar and given the superintendentship of the private audience chamber (*ghusalkhanah*) besides the wazirship. On 6 July the subahdarship of Ajmer and the faujdarship of Narnol were conferred upon him in addition to his hereditary province of Avadh. But he wisely exchanged his new subah of Ajmer with that of Allahabad (July 1748) which was contiguous to Avadh and had been conferred upon Saadat Khan Zulfiqar Jang, the new mir bakhshi.¹⁷

SAFDAR JANG AS WAZIR : COURT POLITICS

Safdar Jang placed before the emperor an ambitious programme which included the recovery of Afghanistan from Ahmad Shah Abdali and Malwa from the Marathas, besides the rooting out of rebellious

¹⁶ According to *Gulistān-i-Rahmat* (111-112) the victory was due entirely to the valour of Safdar Jang and his troops. Anandram extols the valour of Mir Mannu but adds that Safdar Jang fought bravely.

¹⁷ *Styār*, III, 868-69, 872, 883. *Delhi Chronicle*, 35-37, 39. *Tūrīkh-i-Ahmad Shāhī*, 14b. *Shākir*, 62.

colonies of the Ruhelas, Bangash Afghans and Jats that had sprung up during the last fifty years in the very heart of the empire. But even a fraction of this programme could not be successfully executed owing to the personal limitations of the wazir as well as the peculiar circumstances under which he had to work. Safdar Jang was not a man of towering personality or genius and lacked constructive statesmanship of a high order. He could hardly disarm opposition, command the respect of his colleagues or extort co-operation from unwilling hands. Unable to rise above petty jealousies, he pursued the barren policy of undermining the influence of his political rivals by trying to deprive them of official employment and hereditary jagirs. Apart from these personal inadequacies, there were various forces at the court and outside which conspired to nullify his projects for the rejuvenation of the empire. The Turani party headed by Intizam-ud-daulah, son of the late wazir Qamr-ud-din Khan, who claimed the wizarat for himself and treated Safdar Jang as a usurper, was openly hostile to the new wazir. The all-powerful eunuch Javid Khan, entitled Nawab Bahadur, in alliance with the queen-mother Udham Bai with whom he wielded unbounded influence, openly intrigued against Safdar Jang and poisoned the ears of the emperor Ahmad Shah who not only acquiesced in factious intrigues but also became a tool in the hands of the premier's enemies.

Although rancorous ill-will between the wazir and his supporters on the one hand and the Turani faction on the other had existed from the very beginning, its earliest public manifestation occurred in November 1748 when an unsuccessful Turani plot aiming at the wazir's life was brought to light.¹⁸ This was followed by an invitation (January 1749) to the most powerful Turani chief, Nasir Jang of Hyderabad, to come to Delhi to co-operate with Intizam-ud-daulah in bringing about Safdar Jang's dismissal, the emperor placing himself actively at the head of the conspirators. The wazir's firmness, however, frightened the emperor and saved the situation; Nasir Jang returned to the Deccan disappointed.¹⁹

At the end of December 1748 Ahmad Shah Abdali invaded the Punjab again to wipe off the disgrace of the recent defeat. Muin-ul-mulk, the new governor, who had not yet been able to consolidate his position, was obliged, because of the failure of the central government to send him reinforcement, to surrender after three months' resistance. He promised to pay to the Abdali 14 lakhs of rupees annually as the surplus revenue of the four districts of Sialkot,

¹⁸ *Delhi Chronicle*, 46. *Tārikh-i-'Alī*, 193b. *Tārikh-i-Ahmad Shahī*, 17b-18b.

¹⁹ *Siyār*, III, 886. *Tārikh-i-Ahmad Shahī*, 36b. *SPD*, II, 12, 13.

Aurangabad, Gujrat and Pasrur, which had been given away to Nadir Shah in 1739. Even this humiliation of the empire failed to induce Safdar Jang to sink his differences with the Turani nobles for whose abasement he continued to cherish schemes, sometimes openly and at others secretly. With a view to subverting Muin-ul-mulk's authority he fomented two rebellions in the Punjab; but both were eventually suppressed. Bitterness between the parties was aggravated.

SAFDAR JANG, JATS AND AFGHANS

Safdar Jang's next move was a simultaneous attempt to uproot the Jats and the Ruhelas. Two expeditions were planned and undertaken against the Jats at one and the same time, the one by the wazir himself who proceeded against Balram of Ballabhgarh, 24 miles south of Delhi, and the other by the mir bakhshi Saadat Khan Zulfiqar Jang who marched against Suraj Mal of Bharatpur. Their plan was to catch the Jats between two fires. But both met with failure.²⁰ In regard to the Afghans, Safdar Jang's cunning policy aimed at weakening the ruling families of their two settlements in the Doab, namely the Bangash nawabs of Farrukhabad and the Ruhelas of Ruhelkhand, by embroiling them in a fratricidal conflict, and then dealing with each of them individually at his leisure.

In pursuance of this policy the wazir secured imperial sanction (July 1749) for the appointment of Qaim Khan, son of late Muhammad Khan Bangash of Farrukhabad, as governor of Ruhelkhand, which was then in possession of Sadullah Khan, son of Ali Muhammad Khan Ruhela lately deceased.²¹ Unable to resist the temptation of the glittering bait, Qaim Khan fell into the trap so cleverly laid by the wazir, and marched against Sadullah Khan at the head of 50,000 troops. The Ruhelas mustered strong for defending their homeland. A contested battle was fought (November 1749) near Dauri Rasulpur, 5 miles south-east of Badaun. Qaim Khan perished with most of his officers.

The news was highly gratifying to Safdar Jang who planned to occupy the Bangash estate of Farrukhabad on the plea of enforcing the well-known but long-defunct Mughal custom according to which the sovereign claimed to be the heir to the lands and personal effects of all his nobles. He obtained the emperor's approval of the scheme,

20 *Tarikh-i-Ahmad Shâhi*, 21b, 23b.

21 Ali Muhammad Khan, who had been appointed saujdar of Sirhind after his defeat by the imperialists in 1743, took advantage of Ahmad Shah Abdali's invasion in 1748, left Sirhind, drove out Safdar Jang's deputy in Ruhelkhand, and made himself master of the territory. He died a few months later (September 1748).

and placing him at the head of his army proceeded to Farrukhabad. By the middle of the year 1750 he was able to occupy the entire Bangash dominion except 12 villages, including the town of Farrukhabad, which had been granted to Muhammad Khan Bangash in perpetuity (*altamgha*) by Farrukhsiyar and could not with propriety be alienated from his family. Safdar Jang stayed there for about five months to assist his newly appointed officers to settle the country, and after having put Nawal Rai at the head of the administration of the occupied districts, himself returned to Delhi (May 1750).²²

Hardly was Safdar Jang's back turned than signs of discontent began to appear among the Afghans, and the countryside was reported to be in the throes of revolt. The wazir, after his return to Delhi, was engaged in chastising the Jats of Ballabhgarh who had laid hands on the imperial thana of Shamspur, a few miles south of the Quth Minar, when he received Nawal Rai's letter reporting a fresh unrest among the Afghans. Safdar Jang fully realised the gravity of the situation. He despatched a force under his cousin Nasir-ud-din Haidar to reinforce Nuwal Rai and desired him not to precipitate action till he himself had reached Farrukhabad. He then made a hurried peace with the local Jats, legalising their recent illegal acquisitions, and entered into a friendly alliance with their patron Suraj Mal (July 1750).²³ He seems to have now realized for the first time that he would not be able to retain power, much less to humble his enemies, the Turani nobles and Afghan rebels, without the co-operation and active assistance of Hindustani chiefs, such as the Jats and the Rajputs. The Irani party of which he had been the leader had become defunct to all intents and purposes. He endeavoured to create a Hindustani party under his leadership.

Having conciliated the Jats, the wazir returned to the capital to make preparations for crushing the Afghan rising which was due partly to the strong rule of Nawal Rai and partly to the turbulence and love of freedom inherent in the Afghan character. Nawal Rai injudiciously put five of the sons of Muhammad Khan Bangash in chains, as he apprehended trouble from them, and sent them to the Allahabad fort. Bibi Sahiba, the widow of Muhammad Khan Bangash, was also kept under surveillance. Lulled into the comfortable belief that all was quiet and that there was no likelihood of any trouble, Nawal Rai allowed most of his troops to go on leave to their homes in Avadh at the beginning of the rainy season (in

²² *Delhi Chronicle*, 52-55. *Siyār*, III, 874-75. *Tārikh-i Ahmad Shāhī*, 22b-23a, 24ab. *Imad*, 44-45.

²³ *Delhi Chronicle*, 57. *Tārikh-i Ahmad Shāhī*, 2ab. *Siyār*, III, 876. *SPD*, II, 15.

July); out of 40,000 troops only 7 to 8 thousand remained with him. The Afghans took prompt advantage of depletion in military resources. Bibi Sahiba's release was effected by a stratagem and she was taken to Mau. She inspired the Afghans to rise against the oppressive rule of the wazir. Ahmad Khan, a son of Muhammad Khan Bangash, was selected as their leader. Nawal Rai was attacked before Safdar Jang could reinforce him. Hopelessly outnumbered and betrayed by an Afghan soldier, he was defeated and killed (August 1750). Ahmad Khan established his control over all parts of the Bangash territory.²⁴

Safdar Jang had started for Farrukhabad before his deputy's disaster. He continued his march, invited aid from Suraj Mal and some other chiefs, and finally met the Afghans on the extensive plain of Ram Chatauni, about 6 miles west of the ancient town of Patiali (September 1750). His right and left wings under Suraj Mal and Ismail Khan respectively charged the Bangash advance-guard under Rustam Khan Afridi, defeated and slew him and pursued his fleeing followers, thus separating themselves by four miles from their main army under the wazir. At this time 5,000 Afghans, who had concealed themselves in an ambush behind a jungle in one corner of the field, made an impetuous attack on the wazir who was wounded and fell unconscious in the howdah. Suraj Mal and Ismail Khan returned in exultation in the evening only to find the wazir beaten and his troops flying towards Delhi. They had no choice but to follow the fugitives the next morning, as the wazir, having been taken out of the field by a few of his trusted followers, was already on the way to Delhi.²⁵

Ahmad Khan's ambition now rose to the highest pitch. He made quick arrangements for the occupation of the imperial territory round Farrukhabad and the conquest of the wazir's provinces of Avadh and Allahabad where administration had already been paralysed by the revolt of powerful hereditary landlords encouraged by the death of Nawal Rai. Parmul Khan Ruhela, an agent of Hafiz Rahmat Khan of Ruhelkhand, was invited to assist his Bangash kinsmen in the work of spoliation. Apart from large tracts in the modern Hardoi and Sitapur districts the Afghans occupied Lucknow which had been evacuated earlier by the wazir's officers. With the fall of Lucknow the reduction of most of Avadh was complete. The work of the Afghans was facilitated by the defection of such notable

24 Irvine in *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 1879, pp. 55, 62-63, 65-66. *Siyār*, III, 875-76. *'Imād*, 46-48. *Gulstān*, 38a. SPD, II, 14.

25 *Delhi Chronicle*, 57-58. *Siyār*, III, 876-78. *'Imād*, 45, 48-49. *Hudūs*, 173-74. SPD, II, 14, 20, 23.

chiefs as Sumur Singh, son of Hindu Singh of Sachendi, Rup Singh, son of Bhagwant Singh Khichar of Asothar, Akbar Shah of Azamgarh, Balwant Singh of Banaras and Prithvipati of Pratapgarh who were at loggerheads with the ruling family of Avadh. They openly joined the Afghan invaders in the hope of securing better terms. A little later several other Hindu chiefs formed a confederacy under the leadership of the Raikwar, chief of Ramnagar in Barabanki. Safdar Jang's rule became temporarily extinct in northern Avadh. The province of Allahabad suffered the same fate; only the fort at Allahabad held out under the able command of Baquaullah Khan.

But the good fortune of the Afghans proved to be shortlived. A resistance movement organized by the shaikhzadas of Lucknow liberated the city from their oppressive yoke. The infection spread to other towns of the subah. Avadh soon reverted to its legitimate ruler, Safdar Jang. Ahmad Khan Bangash made an unsuccessful siege of the fort of Allahabad in the early months of 1751. The Afghans plundered and burnt the city of Allahabad. They also made disturbances in Jaunpur and Banaras.²⁶

SAFDAR JANG, MARATHAS AND AFGHANS

Tormented by mental agony and public humiliation, Safdar Jang returned to Delhi to find that his defeat had provided his enemies at the court with a convenient excuse to attempt to replace him by his Turani rival Intizam-ud-daulah. Their intrigues during his absence had, however, proved fruitless owing to the masculine courage and vigilance of his consort Sadr-un-nisa who massed troops round her mansion and baffled the Turani designs on his property. On his return Safdar Jang held out threats to the conspirators and, detaching the eunuch Javid Khan by the offer of a handsome bribe, dissolved the coalition against him. His difficulties forced on him the policy of an alliance with the Maratha leaders, Jayappa Sindhia and Malhar Rao Holkar, whose services he secured on payment of a daily allowance of 25,000 rupees. This was an expedient opposed to the traditional Mughal policy of hostility towards them, and condemned by all historians contemporary and modern. No other course was, however, open to Safdar Jang unless he was prepared to surrender not only the premier's office but also his hereditary dominions and retire into private life. The Ruhela and Bangash Afghans were in secret alliance with their kinsman Ahmad Shah Abdali as also with the Turani chiefs, the bitterest rivals of Safdar

²⁶ *Sipār*, III, 879-80. *Imād*, 50-51. *Haddī*, 168, 174. *SPD*, II, 29-30. *Balwant Nāma*, 27ab.

Jang; the Marathas were the only Indian power that could give the hard-pressed wazir effective aid against this formidable combination.

When necessary preparations had been completed and a renewal of Suraj Mal's services on a daily allowance of 15,000 rupees had been obtained, Safdar Jang started on his second expedition against the Bangash Afghans in March 1751. His first success was the defeat of Shadil Khan, the Afghan faujdar of the country extending from Aligarh to Patiali, near Qadirganj, 30 miles north-east of Etawa, in April. Next Ahmad Khan Bangash, who had hastily returned, foiled in his attempt to capture Allahabad, was besieged in the Fatehgarh fort, on the right bank of the Ganges, about 3 miles south-east of Farrukhabad. The wazir's Maratha allies launched a vigorous attack on the Ruhelas under Sadullah Khan, the chief of Ruhelkhand, who had brought 12,000 troops to reinforce his Bangash kinsman and was encamped on the left bank opposite Fatehgarh. The united Afghan army was 30,000 strong; but this large force was defeated with great slaughter and the Ruhela chief hastily fled away to Aonla. This disastrous defeat so much alarmed Ahmad Khan that he fled to Aonla during the following night to take shelter with the Ruhelas, leaving his entire dominion and property to be occupied by the wazir.²⁷

It took Safdar Jang a little over one month to establish his sway over the whole of the Bangash territory and to punish the people for the resistance they had put up. Thereafter he proceeded to Avadh, which had been in the throes of a rebellion, to take measures for repairing the Afghan ravages and to chastise the rebellious zamin-dars. This work kept him busy in his own province till about the middle of November 1751.

After the rains the Afghans made an attempt to recover their territory. But they were stoutly opposed for over a month by the Marathas, posted in the Bangash territory throughout the rainy season, till the wazir hastened back to reinforce his allies (November 1751). The Afghans were driven away; Ahmad Khan and Sadullah Khan with their families and tribesmen were once again fugitives. They evacuated the whole of Ruhelkhand, besides the Bangash dominion, and took shelter in a hilly place called Chilkiya, 22 miles north-east of Kashipur. It was a place of strategic importance, but they found no safety here. Accompanied by the Marathas and the

27 SPD, II, 2, 4, 9, 13, 32. *Patren Yadi*, 67, 79, 83. Rajwade; III, 160. *Gulistan*, 40-41.

Naga cavalry under Rajendra Giri Gosain,²⁸ who had only recently joined him, Safdar Jang pursued the fugitives and besieged them for more than two months. But he was unable to dislodge them, as the Marathas, whose policy was against the total extermination of the Afghans, had now become markedly lukewarm. Moreover, he was seriously discouraged by a defeat suffered by Rajendra Giri Gosain.

Meanwhile disquieting developments were taking place in the north-west. It was reported that Ahmad Shah Abdali was coming to relieve his Afghan kinsmen fighting against the wazir. Safdar Jang received the emperor's directive to conclude peace and return to Delhi. He was thus obliged to open negotiations through the imperial messenger Ali Quli Khan and the Maratha officer Gangadhar. Ahmad Khan Bangash, whose troops were badly suffering from want of provisions and the rigour of climate, seized the opportunity. He agreed to pay an indemnity of 30 lakhs (according to another authority, 80 lakhs) and offered, as a security for the due discharge of the above, temporary surrender of half of his dominion, that is, the country from Koil (Aligarh) in the north to Kora Jahanabad in the south-east, to be occupied by the victor till such time as the whole amount was paid off. As Safdar Jang owed 30 lakhs to the Marathas, he allowed them to occupy this territory and to receive payment of the indemnity from Ahmad Khan whenever it was made. The Ruhelas, besides being reinstated in their possessions, were allowed to retain on payment of an annual revenue those parganahs of the Bangash territory which they had seized after Qaim Khan's death. Safdar Jang's gains out of these two costly wars were only nominal, for he secured nothing more than a few places in the Bangash estate; but he had the moral satisfaction of a victory.²⁹ It was, however, a very costly victory in so far as it was subversive of the cordiality that had existed for some time between him and the Marathas.

Even before he had put his signature to the treaty, Safdar Jang had to return Lucknow where many political and administrative problems awaited his attention. Ravages following Nawal Rai's death and the Afghan invasion were yet unrepaired. Some of his biggest and most influential vassals were in revolt. He appointed Muham-

²⁸ He was a Naga Gosain and *sanyasi* from the village of Moth, 32 miles north-east of Jhansi. There he got a jagi from the Marathas and built a fort. As his power grew he incurred the displeasure of the Marathas. He went to Allahabad and rendered good service to Safdar Jang's men besieged there by the Afghans. Then he accepted service under the wazir, fought for him in the second Afghan war, and died fighting for him against the imperialists in 1753.

²⁹ *Gulistān*, 41-44. *Tūrīkh-i Ahmad Shāhī*, 28b-31b. *Siyār*, 881-82.

mad Quli Khan, son of his elder brother Mirza Muhsin, deputy governor of Avadh, and undertook a long tour of the two provinces to reduce the rebellious chiefs to submission and restore order. He treacherously murdered raja Prithvipati Sombansi of Pratapgarh who had entered into an alliance with Ahmad Khan Bangash and had actively assisted him during his invasion of Avadh. The next internal enemy was raja Balwant Singh of Banaras who had fled to the hills of Mirzapur, leaving his capital to be plundered by the wazir's army. Safdar Jang detached a contingent to pursue the raja who won time by negotiations, offering a present of two lakhs besides an increase in the annual tribute. His patience and diplomacy were rewarded with success. Safdar Jang, being pressed by the imperial summits to return to Delhi to concert measures of defence against the threatened Abdali invasion, accepted Balwant Singh's offer, restored his state to him, and left Banaras (March 1752).³⁰

SAFDAR JANG'S LOSS OF WAZIR'S OFFICE

During the wazir's absence from Delhi Ahmad Shah Abdali invaded the Punjab for the third time to chastise Muin-ul-mulk, its governor, for his failure to remit regularly the tribute for the four districts which he had pledged himself to pay three years before, and to divert Safdar Jang's attention from the Afghans whom he was besieging in the hills of Chilkiya. At this crisis of the empire the wazir did not raise his little finger to help the hard-pressed governor of the frontier province. In spite of repeated orders of recall Safdar Jang, who was an avowed enemy of Muin-ul-mulk, unconcernedly went on with the work of punishing the refractory zamindars in Avadh and Allahabad and re-establishing his rule in these provinces. It was only after the fall of Lahore to the Abdali that the wazir started for Delhi in April 1752. Somewhere near Kanauj he met Malhar Rao Holkar and Jayappa Sindhi and on behalf of the emperor entered into a defensive agreement with the Marathas. The Peshwa undertook to protect the empire from the clutches of the Abdali as also against its internal foes. In return for this undertaking he would receive from the emperor 50 lakhs of rupees in cash, the chauth of two provinces (the Punjab and Sind) as also of the districts of Hissar, Sambhal, Muradabad and Badaun, and the viceroyalty of Ajmer and Agra.

Before this agreement could be given effect to, the emperor was compelled to cede the Punjab and Multan to the Abdali. Safdar Jang reached Delhi in May 1752, a few days after the ignominious treaty had been signed by the emperor. The wazir's cherished scheme of

³⁰ *Balwant Nāmā*, 30a, 31a. *Hadia*, 647, 672-75. *Slyār*, III, 882.

driving the Afghans out of the Punjab and Multan with the assistance of the Marathas was completely frustrated. His Maratha allies began to plunder the villages around Delhi. Javid Khan bought off the Marathas and they left Delhi. The emperor granted revenue concessions to Safdar Jang and persuaded him to enter Delhi (July 1752).³¹

Safdar Jang now found that he was left wazir in name only. All the authority and prestige of his office had passed into the hands of Javid Khan who, in alliance with the queen-mother, was keeping the weak and foolish emperor under his tutelage and transacting all important business of the state. This was highly offensive to the wazir who could not tolerate a partner in the direction of government. The eunuch's protege, Balu Jat, seized the emperor's privy purse estate (Sikandrabad) which lay close to Delhi and defied the wazir. In September 1752 Safdar Jang's men murdered Javid Khan. But this murder produced results contrary to those expected by the jealous wazir. He had hoped that after the all-powerful eunuch's removal he would acquire unrivalled ascendancy at court and complete hold over the emperor's mind. But Ahmad Shah turned his heart away from the wazir in disgust and alarm. Always accustomed to lean on others, he now began extending his favours to Safdar Jang's enemies and finally fell completely into the hands of Intizam-ud-daulah and his companions.

To this result Safdar Jang's conduct during the next seven months contributed not less materially than his original crime. His grasping nature after the murder of Javid Khan was like that of a selfish dictator, caring for nothing else except personal domination at the court and in the realm. The murdered eunuch's property and estate were confiscated and his officers were maltreated. Then the wazir proceeded to secure his hold over the imperial fort and surround Ahmad Shah's person with his own creatures. The emperor was alarmed. Most of the hereditary and powerful nobles at the court and in the provinces were antagonised. Instead of keeping his colleagues contented the wazir followed from the beginning of his administration the policy of not allowing anybody to be rich and powerful. He secured to himself the transfer of rich hereditary jagirs held by Firuz Jang, Intizam-ud-daulah and a few other Turani nobles, setting the whole race of the Central Asian Sunni Mughals against him. He had driven the Ruhela and Bangash Afghans and their kinsmen, who formed the most important element of the Mur-

³¹ Rajwade, I, 1; VI, 199. *Tarikh-i-Ahmad Shahi*, 33b-34b, 35, 38ab, 40b. *Delhi Chronicle*, 70-71. *Siyar*, III, 889. Shakir, 65.

lim population of north India, next only to the Turanis, to be his implacable enemies. In the provinces, too, he had but a few allies; he had foolishly offended such a neighbour as his co-religionist Ali-vardi Khan of Bengal as early as 1742. The general public was equally dissatisfied. Using his official position as chancellor of the exchequer Safdar Jang misappropriated the revenues of the empire and spent them on his personal military establishment, while the imperial officers, household servants and troops starved, their salaries falling in arrears for two years. Naturally the country could not be protected from internal and external invaders. The Marathas threatened the imperial capital and Ahmad Shah Abdali arrived at Attock.

Towards the beginning of the year 1753 the popular indignation in Delhi against Safdar Jang's dictatorship reached its climax, the inexorable nemesis was to overtake him now. During the preceding few months a party antagonistic to him had been slowly but steadily gaining ground and a conspiracy being secretly matured to bring about his fall. The moving spirit in this conspiracy was the queen-mother Udhram Bai, who had a very clever and influential associate in Intizam-ud-daulah. Assured of the emperor's full support, the latter openly declared himself against the all-powerful wazir, collected troops, and by a well-planned *coup d'état* deprived the wazir of the command of the palace fort (March 1753). A few days later the outmanoeuvred wazir left Delhi with his family and baggage.

The inevitable armed contest soon followed. The imperialists were able to secure the support of the Marathas who rejected Safdar Jang's offer of a rich jagir. His vacillation and inactivity, coupled with his incapacity as a leader of men, strengthened the hands of his rivals and gave them a much-needed opportunity to organize their troops. His most powerful ally was Suraj Mal Jat, whose plundering hordes created terror in Delhi. On 13 May 1753 the emperor formally dismissed Safdar Jang from the office of the first minister and appointed Intizam-ud-daulah as his successor. As a reply to this Safdar Jang placed a eunuch on the throne, calling him 'Akbar Shah, the Just', and giving him out to be the grandson of Kam Bakhsh, the youngest son of Aurangzib. It soon became clear, however, that the dismissed wazir was no match for Imad-ul-mulk, an unscrupulous youth of extraordinary talents, energy and organizing skill, who had become the supreme leader of the imperial forces. In June 1753 Rajendra Giri Gosain, the bravest and most fearless leader of Safdar Jang's army, fell fighting in the cause of his master.

The war lasted for a little more than six months and exhausted the patience and resources of both the parties. The prospect of the coming of the Marathas to take part in it alarmed the emperor, for he knew that their alliance with the ambitious Imad-ul-mulk would make the latter more formidable than Safdar Jang had been a few months earlier. Safdar Jang also knew that the arrival of the Marathas would bring about his utter ruin. Imad-ul-mulk alone was all for war. In October 1753 peace was concluded with Suraj Mal through the mediation of Madho Singh of Jaipur. In November Madho Singh's agent carried the emperor's farman to Safdar Jang. The civil war came to an end. Confirmed in his provinces of Avadh and Allahabad, Safdar Jang proceeded towards Lucknow.

Within four months of Safdar Jang's retirement the emperor grew tired of Imad-ul-mulk's dictatorship and invited the ex-wazir to join an expedition against Imad-ul-mulk and his Maratha allies. Safdar Jang proceeded as far as Mehdi-ghat on the Ganges, below Kanauj, and awaited the emperor's arrival at Aligarh. But Imad-ul-mulk, assisted by the Marathas, made himself wazir, deposed Ahmad Shah, and put Alamgir II on the throne (June 1754). Seeing that the emperor's plan had totally miscarried, Safdar Jang returned to Avadh. He died in October 1754.³²

Although his life was full of strenuous military activity, yet Safdar Jang can hardly be called a successful soldier. In fact, he lacked the courage and zeal of a soldier and the capacity and tact of a general; throughout his official career he could not achieve unaided a single victory over an enemy possessing even half his military strength and financial resources. As an administrator he did not rise above the rank of mediocrity. He lacked the foresight of a statesman, the genius of a hard-headed politician and the reforming zeal of an administrator. He was averse to taking risks which able rulers can seldom avoid. He did nothing to arrest the downward course of the already dwindled empire or even to improve the lot of the people in his direct charge. As wazir he was an utter failure. His greatest achievement was a lasting peace that he gave to Avadh and Allahabad, broken only by the temporary Bangash occupation of a part of the subahs and a few local spasmodic outbreaks in the beginning of his rule. In an age when most parts of India were bowing low before the Marathas, Avadh and Allahabad were the only provinces (except the Punjab) which were still unvisited

³² *Tārikh-i-Ahmad Shāhi*, 38-90, 97-98, 103-4, 106, 110, 115-37. *Shakir*, 71-77. *Siyār*, III, 890-94. *Delhi Chronicle*, 73-82.

by their plundering hordes. Although he was a pious Shia, Safdar Jang was not a bigot. His religious policy was one of complete toleration and his highest and most trusted officers were Hindus.

SUCCESSION OF SHUJA-UD-DAULAH

Safdar Jang was succeeded in the governorship of Avadh and Allahabad by his only son, Shuja-ud-daulah, then in the prime of youth.³³ The new nawab inherited his father's quarrel with the powerful wazir, Imad-ul-mulk. In May 1755 he organized a swift and sudden plot to secure the wazirship, but it proved abortive. A year later Imad-ul-mulk transferred the subah of Allahabad to Ahmad Khan Bangash; but Shuja did not allow his rival to take possession of Allahabad and the wazir had to confirm Shuja's *de facto* possession.

After an expedition against raja Balwant Singh of Banaras Shuja had to confront the wazir once again. The latter was now able to make use of Ahmad Shah Abdali, whose plan in 1756-57 was to win back for Alamgir II the lost provinces of Hindustan from the hands of rebel governors. A Mughal army headed by two imperial princes advanced into the Doab. On receipt of this information Shuja opened negotiations with the Marathas who had advanced under Raghunath Rao as far as Jaipur. The latter sent 23,000 troops with the double purpose of recovering the Maratha possessions in the fertile Doab and of making a military demonstration against the imperialists. Then Shuja advanced to meet the imperial army which was under the *de facto* command of Imad-ul-mulk. After light fighting peace was concluded in June 1757, Shuja promising to pay 15 lakhs of rupees.³⁴

In May 1758 Imad-ul-mulk's vulgar ambition and relentless ferocity drove Ali Gauhar, the crown prince, to seek safety in exile. In January 1759 Shuja received him at Lucknow and in the course of confidential conversation the scheme of an expedition to Patna as a preliminary to the conquest of Bengal, which had recently caught the prince's fancy, was decided upon. The nawab's real interest at this stage was not extension of territory eastward; what he really wanted was to oust his cousin Muhammed Quli Khan (to whom he had always been seriously hostile) from Allahabad by

³³ He was born in January 1732. He died at the age of 44 years four months (lunar).

³⁴ SPD, II, 72, 76, 79; XXI, 114, 116, 117, 120-23; 125-35; XXVII, 146, 161, 170, 172, 173, 181, 182, 190. Rajwade, VI, 577, 578. *Delhi Chronicle*, 113, 114, 140. *Siyār*, III, 899. *Gulistān*, 52-54. Samin (*Indian Antiquary*, 1907, 64-70). Harcharan, 431b-432a.

taking advantage of his absence from his dominion for participation in the proposed campaign in Bihar. After the failure of the prince's first invasion of Bihar Shuja captured Allahabad in April 1759 from Muhammad Quli Khan. The whole of the province of Allahabad, except the sarkar of Kalinjar belonging to the descendants of Chhatrasal Bundela, of which Shuja had hitherto been the nominal master, now passed under his effective control.³⁵ Two years later Muhammad Quli Khan was murdered under Shuja's order.

SHUJA-U-D-DAULAH AND MARATHAS: PANIPAT

The occupation of the Allahabad subah almost coincided with the beginning of Shuja's serious contest with the Marathas. Ever since the days of Safdar Jang the Marathas had been anxious to secure the cession of the Hindu holy places (Allahabad, Banaras and Ayodhya) in the Avadh subah by a friendly agreement and failing that, by threat or force of arms. In 1759 the object of their policy was not only the acquisition, by peaceful means or otherwise, of these three flourishing towns in Avadh, but also of bringing Shuja under their effective political control. Their first enterprise was an expedition to crush the Ruhela chief Najib Khan; they besieged his fortified post at Sukartal. Realizing that the overthrow of Najib would be a prelude to the conquest of Ruhelkhand and Avadh, Shuja personally came to relieve him at the head of a large army which, however, he was not prepared to employ against the Marathas. His purpose being to prevent the total destruction of Najib's power he offered his services to mediate between the parties. The news that Ahmad Shah Abdali had invaded the Punjab compelled the Marathas to raise the seige in December 1759.

In view of the impending conflict between the Marathas and the Afghans both parties tried to win over the powerful nawab of Avadh. As Ahmad Shah himself with his big army lay encamped at Aligarh, not far from the western frontier of Avadh, the Afghan negotiations with Shuja had military sanction behind them, and this was one of the reasons why they proved successful in the end. The crafty Najib Khan also played an important part as Abdali's envoy in persuading Shuja to join the coalition against the Marathas.

Shuja's alliance with the Abdali proved to be of immense benefit to the Afghans. His presence on the side of the foreign invader gave the latter's cause an enormous accession of moral prestige. But for it, the general public of the time would have regarded the contest as one between the foreign Afghans and Indo-Afghans on the one

³⁵ *Siyâr*, III, 656, 658-59, 669, 671-73. Ghulam Ali, 81-82, 86, *'Imâd*, 69.

side and the Marathas on the other for supremacy over India that it really was, and not as one between the Marathas and the non-Marathas, which Najib Khan and the Abdali were anxious to make it appear to the contemporary Indian world. Although Shuja's adhesion alone might not have led to important military results, his troops were by no means negligible. Their disciplined ranks remained in position to the last and made a material contribution to the Afghan victory in the battle of Panipat.

SHUJA-UD-DAULAH AND SHAH ALAM II: EXPEDITION TO BUNDELKHAND

Even before the battle of Plassey the English had been suspicious of Shuja-ud-daulah's ambitious designs and had been keeping a vigilant eye on his movements in the eastern parts of the Avadh subah. But it was not before 1759 that he indicated a desire to interfere in the affairs of Bengal, and even then his interest was half-hearted. He encouraged the refugee crown prince Ali Gauhar to march to Bihar and promised to come quickly behind him after making his preparations. But this promise was not redeemed, and no military aid was given. Even after his ignominious failure at Patna the prince did not give up his dream of conquest of the eastern provinces. In December 1759 he crowned himself emperor and took the title of Shah Alam on hearing that his father Alamgir II had been murdered. He nominated Shuja as his wazir. He was formally invested with the robes of the prime minister's post on 15 February 1762. In 1760-61 the new emperor invaded Bihar twice—only to be beaten back. During these adventures he had no material aid from Avadh.

After Panipat Shuja began to take a more serious interest in the affairs of the new emperor who was unable to return to his capital on account of the hostility of his father's murderer, Imad-ul-mulk. In May 1761 Shah Alam left Bihar and crossed into Avadh where he was well received by the nawab.

The Maratha defeat at Panipat had undermined the foundation of their administration in north India and swept away their rule from the Doab and Bundelkhand along with their dominance at the imperial court. There was now a sudden scramble for the lands belonging to the Marathas. Shuja, now in a position to use the emperor's name, wanted to seize this opportunity to occupy Bundelkhand of which, in view of his holding the viceroyalty of Allahabad, he considered himself to be the legitimate master. So the emperor and the wazir arrived at Kalpi in December 1761. Kalpi fell without a

blow, the Maratha officer in charge of the place having fled away. Jhansi was occupied after a regular siege (February 1762). Most of the ruling chiefs of Bundelkhand now sent in congratulatory messages and presents; but Hindupati, a great-grandson of Chhatrasal Bundela, adopted an attitude of disdainful aloofness and provoked the wrath of the wazir by giving shelter to the Maratha refugees from Kalpi and Jhansi. In April 1762 he was compelled to make peace on promise of paying a fine of 75 lakhs and an annual tribute of 25 lakhs. A rebellion in Avadh diverted the wazir's attention from Bundelkhand; the recalcitrant Bundela chief put off the payment on one pretext or another and treated Shuja's demands with scant attention. A second expedition was sent against him in December 1762, but victory favoured the rebel chief.³⁶ More than a year later—in February 1764—a third expedition was sent against Hindupati under the command of Mir Qasim, the ex-nawab of Bengal who was then an ally of the wazir. The raja submitted, paid a part of the tribute due from him, and promised to clear the balance some time later.

Ever since his return from Patna in June 1761 Shah Alam had been eagerly looking forward to his journey to Delhi and to the day when he would take his seat on his ancestral throne. True to his old policy of giving a fresh lease of life to the Mughal empire, Ahmad Shah Abdali endeavoured to get him recognized as emperor by important Indian powers and confirmed Shuja's appointment as wazir. The latter now set to work to escort the emperor to his capital. Shah Alam, accompanied by the wazir, his court and troops, started for Delhi in January 1763. As Ahmad Khan Bangash of Farrukhabad did not join the imperialists the wazir, who had been hostile to the Bangash nawab, persuaded Shah Alam to chastise him first and then move on towards Delhi. Ahmad Khan Bangash made military preparations. The dispute was, however, peacefully settled through the intervention of Najib Khan. But the relations between the wazir and the Afghans did not improve, and owing to the latter's recalcitrance the temporary coalition of the leading Muslim chiefs formed with the object of installing the emperor on his ancestral throne broke up. The emperor and the wazir retraced their step towards Avadh.³⁷

³⁶ SPD, XXIX, 22-24, 32, 34, 37, 45. *'Imād*, 80, 86-88. Ghulam Ali, II, 112-15, 137-38, 144-48.

³⁷ *Tārikh-i-Muzaffuri*, 223a-224a. Ghulam Ali, II, 152-63, 165-67. *'Imād*, 90-91.

SHUJA-UD-DAULAH AND THE ENGLISH

As stated above, Shuja began to take more than half-hearted interest in the affairs of the refugee emperor Shah Alam after the battle of Panipat. The news of his intention to march towards Bihar aroused suspicion in the minds of Mir Qasim, the nawab of Bengal, and his English friends. Major Carnac wrote a letter clearly warning him against crossing the boundary of Bihar. Shah Alam also wrote to him, advising him to remain encamped on the other side of the Karmanasa and not to enter Mir Qasim's territory. Shuja had to give up his intention of proceeding beyond the eastern boundary of his own subahs. Thus melted away the immediate danger to Bengal from Shuja, if there had existed any danger at all, but the English authorities at Calcutta and their agents at Patna continued to harbour suspicion of his alleged designs on Bengal.

In 1762, on the eve of sending his second expedition against the Bundela chief Hindupati of Bundelkhand, Shuja asked the governor of Fort William to assist him with 1,000 European troops, some sepoys and a few English guns. The English, however, were not prepared to send their troops to such a long distance from Bengal. They were also dissuaded from complying with the wazir's request by Mir Qasim, who was not favourably disposed towards Shuja.³⁸

SHUJA-UD-DAULAH AND MIR QASIM

Within two years Mir Qasim himself was a refugee in the wazir's camp. He knew that Shuja was not well-disposed towards him; but he had no other choice. The Marathas, the Ruhelas and the Jats cared little for affairs in distant Bengal, while Shuja, being its nearest neighbour, took a keen interest in its political upheavals. Moreover, as imperial wazir, he could, with some show of reason, take up Mir Qasim's cause on behalf of the empire which, in spite of its decay, still commanded great moral prestige throughout the country.

Desirous of fishing in the troubled waters of the eastern provinces Shuja hastened with Shah Alam to Allahabad and in August 1763 wrote to Mir Jafar, Vansittart and Ellis, offering them assistance against Mir Qasim. But the Calcutta authorities informed him that the English did not stand in need of assistance and took prompt steps for the defence of Bihar. Mir Qasim's agent arrived at Shuja's court in October 1763; he found crafty rivals in Shitab Rai and Beni Bahadur, who worked in the interest of the English. The English wanted not merely the emperor's recognition of Mir Jafar as the legitimate

³⁸ CPC, I, 1038, 1156, 1181, 1306, 1394, 1614, 1615, 1622, 1630-32.

nawab of Bengal but also a defensive alliance with Shuja against Mir Qasim, and their main object was to get the latter punished or delivered into their hands. But they were not prepared to make a friendly cession of Bihar to the wazir, nor were they prepared to assure payment of an annual tribute to the emperor from Bengal. Mir Qasim's envoys, on the other hand, were lavish in payments and also in promises. Mir Qasim himself met Shuja in January 1764, and led on his behalf a successful expedition against Hindupati of Bundelkhand in the following month.

After protracted negotiations with the English Shuja finally committed himself to Mir Qasim's cause in March 1764. The latter had already bound himself to defray the expenses of the wazir's army at the rate of 11 lakhs of rupees per month from the day he crossed the Karmanasa and to cede to him the province of Bihar after he had been restored to the masnad of Bengal. Probably he had also agreed to pay to the wazir a sum of three crores of rupees on the successful conclusion of the expedition.³⁹

BATTLE OF BUXAR

The armies of the two nawabs crossed the Karmanasa in April 1764. Their total strength is put by the biographer of Medec at 1,50,000 men, cavalry and infantry being almost equal in number, and 200 pieces of artillery. Of these, the combatants numbered 40,000 according to the highest computation, the rest being non-combatants. Although we cannot accept Ghulam Iltusain Khan's rhetoric without cautious reservations, the allied army, notwithstanding its numerical superiority and the strength of its artillery, was by no means a powerful instrument of war. Composed as it was of diverse races, such as Qizilbashes, Turani Mughals, Pathans, Nagas and other Hindus, besides the French (about 200 in number), having little regimental discipline or military training (except in the case of the French and the troops under Samru) and with nothing to bind the mercenaries together except the person of the wazir, the army was no better than an armed heterogeneous mob. Again, although Shuja was the chief commander of the allied army, there was no real harmony of interest and purpose between him and his allies. The emperor was at cross purposes with his wazir and was secretly corresponding with the English who were anxious to foment differences between the two. Even Mir Qasim

³⁹ *Ibid.* 1098, 1156, 1181, 1306, 1364, 1394, 1614, 1850-53, 1855, 1897-98, 1901-2, 1922, 1927, 1980-82, 1984-87, 1988, 1989, 1999, 2000-2, 2005, 2017, 2023, 2039-40, 2050, 2052, 2054, 2063, 2065, 2069. *Khulāsat-ut-tawārikh*, 119a, 120b, 123a-125b, 132b-134a. *Siyār*, III, 742-46.

did not cheerfully co-operate with the wazir and take an active part in the campaign. Such an army with such leaders was hardly likely to succeed against English leadership and discipline and western military science.

The English force under Carnac was comparatively weak in numerical strength and much inferior in cavalry. The total number of troops in charge of Carnac and Mir Jafar was estimated at 19,000 in all. They had suffered from the strain and fatigue of more than four months' continuous campaigning against Mir Qasim which had caused a heavy loss of men. On the eve of the struggle there was a dangerous mutiny in consequence of which almost all the French troops had deserted. Shuja was trying to corrupt the Indian sepoys in the Company's force. Food supplies were not sufficient. Above all, Carnac was rather a cautious man and did not possess that intrepidity and the habit of taking the offensive which had characterized Clive and Watson and assured for them victories against numerically superior Indian forces. But these defects were more than counterbalanced by the superior training of the English troops and the Indian sepoys, their better and more scientific weapons, cool courage and discipline, staying power and solidarity in the face of danger in the field of battle.

Carnac had reached Buxar on 17 March 1764, with instructions to cross the Karmanasa and carry war into the wazir's territories. But disquieting reports about the numerical strength of the wazir's army and his personal intrepidity filled him with alarm, and he began a pusillanimous retreat in the first week of April to Patna, where he reached on 23 April. Shuja followed him closely behind and arrived near his entrenchment at Panch-Pahari on 3 May. There a battle was fought on the same day, resulting in Shuja's defeat.⁴⁰ For twenty days after this battle he roved round Patna, blockading the fort, the city and the English army by keeping his forces within 3 or 4 miles of the latter's entrenchments and round the city, but not feeling himself strong enough to actively begin a regular siege or make an assault on the English position in accordance with a well-thought-out scheme. After fruitless negotiations for peace he left Patna on 23 May and finally took up residence, in June, in the fort of Buxar to spend the rainy season there. Meanwhile an English detachment under Champion plundered his territories.

Buxar, on the south bank of the Ganges, 25 miles due east of the town of Ghazipur, was a strategic place well protected by nature.

⁴⁰ Bengal Secret Consultations (14 May 1764), II, 180-81. *Siyār*, II, 749-50. *Tasbirāt-ul-Nāzīrīn*, 632-34. *Khulāsat*, 136ab. *Harcharan*, 459ab.

Here Shuja might have made excellent preparations for renewal of the contest; but he succumbed to sensual pleasures, and whenever he emerged from his recreations, he displayed a marked earnestness for an accommodation with the English. They refused to budge an inch, made preparations for renewal of war, and tried systematically to incite the wazir's enemies and corrupt his troops. Dissatisfied with Carnac's conduct the Calcutta Council appointed Major Hector Munro, then in Bombay, commander-in-chief of the Bengal army.

Since the failure of his Patna expedition Shuja had for certain reasons been much dissatisfied with Mir Qasim. The major part of his army had remained utterly inert in the battle of Panch-Pahari. The stipulated monthly subsidy of 11 lakhs of rupees had fallen into arrears, and Mir Qasim seemed anxious to evade payment by trying to escape from Shuja's camp. He made uncomplimentary remarks about Shuja's alleged low breeding and bad faith. As the wazir was anxious for an accommodation with the English who were insistent on the surrender of Mir Qasim, he wished to remove the original cause of the hostilities by hitting at the ex-nawab. He could not surrender his guest to the English, for it offended against the immemorial oriental custom of not betraying one who had taken shelter and asked for protection. So the wazir decided to follow the less odious course, *viz.*, punishing the ex-nawab by contriving his arrest and spoliation, which he thought would satisfy the English. It also accorded well with his own secret ambition of possessing himself of the unfortunate refugee's wealth and property. Towards the middle of August 1764 Mir Qasim was suddenly made a prisoner and all his treasure and furniture were seized. After a short term of confinement he was able to escape on the eve of the battle of Buxur, to live a miserable life for several years and to die a commoner's death.⁴¹

Meanwhile Major Hector Munro, the newly appointed English commander-in-chief, had arrived at Patna and set to work with zeal and energy to restore the discipline and morale of the Company's forces. In September 1764 he managed to secure the surrender of the important fortress of Rohtas from the governor who was still holding out for Mir Qasim. Shuja's attempt to secure the fort failed. Even then he continued negotiations for peace, although he was not prepared to compromise on the question of cession of Bihar. The English, however, continued to insist on the surrender of Mir Qasim, Samru and the European deserters as conditions precedent to peace. In reality they were convinced that peace was possible only after the

⁴¹ *Siyār*, II, 752-57. *Tārikh-i-Mazaffarī*, 244b-245a. *Imād*, 93-94. Harcharan, 480a. Gulam Ali, II, 177-79.

wazir had been decisively beaten, driven back and made incapable of invading Bengal again.

Shuja's negotiations had not in any way hampered the progress of Munro's work. Leaving Patna on 9 October 1764 he arrived at Buxar on 22 October. His troops encamped on the wide plain to the north of Jagadishpur and between the old village of Churamanpur and the modern village of Katkauli. Shuja's entrenchment was located at a little distance to the east of the fort of Buxar. He decided to take the offensive and fight a pitched battle. The total strength of his army is estimated at between 30,000 and 50,000.

The fateful battle took place on 23 October 1764; it lasted for about three hours. Shuja's defeat was complete.⁴² All was over with his huge and magnificently accoutred army, scattered and defeated. All stores, provisions, baggage and cash in his camp (valued at £ 12,000) became the property of the victors. Besides these, the English acquired 172 guns.

This decisive defeat was not accidental; it was due to several positive causes. Apart from the basic defects of the Avadh army noted above, Shuja was personally not a little responsible for the outcome of the battle. Vain, pleasure-loving and contemptuous of the opinions and advice of his officers and well-wishers, he committed some serious tactical mistakes which do little credit to his generalship. He personally took the command of the right wing and thus lost touch with, and could not supervise the operations in, other corners of the field; in fact he almost surrendered the duty of the supreme general of the whole force. Quite a large body of the Avadh soldiers displayed splendid dash and gallantry; but victory could not be achieved because there was lack of general discipline and organization and the supreme leadership committed mistakes and follies. Shuja's loss in killed and wounded was about 6,000 whereas on the British side it was only 825.

The battle was very hotly contested: more than once the tide was in favour of the wazir and he narrowly missed a victory. Whether judged from the point of view of the status and strength of the parties to the struggle, or the toughness of the contest, or its decisive character and consequences, it ranks among the most important battles of Indian history. Those in charge of the nascent English dominion in India had to fight in this battle not with a mere provincial

⁴² *Sivār*, II, 761-84. *Chulam Ali*, II, 181-85. *Khalīṣat*, 142a-144a. 'Imārī, 95-98. Harcharan, 460a-461a. *Bengal Secret Consultations* (8 November 1764), II, 652. Broome, *History of the Rise and Progress of the Bengal Army*, I, 487-79. Williams, *An Historical Account of the Bengal Native Infantry*, 34-53.

governor and local potentate, a Siraj-ud-daulah or a Mir Qasim, with little connection with the rest of the country, but with the hereditary wazir of the Mughal empire who, though nominally a noble and minister, still commanded respect throughout the land. The shadowy Mughal emperor, with whose name was associated great moral and political prestige, was held in his leading strings. Apart from his official dignity and rank in the imperial court, Shuja was the most important and influential chief in north India at that time. He had reached the noontide splendour of his power; his territorial possessions, financial resources, military establishment and hereditary wazirship had given him a unique position in the whole country. But one single defeat reduced him to dust. He became a fugitive, compelled to beseech aid and seek shelter with his hereditary foes—the Afghans and the Marathas—and his flourishing dominion lay completely at the feet of the English. Their signal victory assured them the peaceful and permanent possession of Bengal and Bihar and supremacy over Avadh and Allahabad. If Munro had lost the day Shuja would have certainly swept the Gangetic valley clear of the English, and it may be doubted whether he would have allowed them, shorn of political power, to reside as peaceful traders in Bengal.

A F T E R B U X A R

Tired and dispirited, Shuja left Buxar immediately after the battle and fled towards Allahabad, where he gathered an army of 30,000 troops and completed his preparations for renewal of war. Munro came to Banaras early in November, established an English factory there, conciliated Shah Alam through alluring promises, and made a friendly settlement with Balwant Singh. Beni Bahadur's negotiations with Munro failed to bring about an accommodation between the wazir and the English. When renewal of war seemed inevitable Munro, acting under instructions from Calcutta, issued a proclamation declaring the emperor supreme over Shuja's provinces. It was agreed that he should be put in possession of both the subahs of Avadh and Allahabad excluding the Banaras state which was conferred on Balwant Singh. The emperor's adhesion brought to the English enormous moral and political prestige.

As a first step towards the effective subjugation of Shuja's dominion Munro besieged Chunar (November-December 1764); but his attempt to capture this strong fortress failed. On receiving the news of Shuja's march from Allahabad towards Chunar he raised the siege and returned to Banaras. In view of the admitted superiority of the English forces Shuja wisely decided to prefer guerilla tactics to a general engagement, cutting off the communications and

stopping the supplies of the English. He marched quickly to Banaras, where he was outwitted by Fletcher (Munro's successor), and then fled to Jaunpur. Fletcher pursued him and occupied Jaunpur on 20 January 1765. Allahabad and Chunar fell on 8 February. These losses proved to be a signal for a general desertion of Shuja's troops. He was now a fugitive, flying for protection and attended by a handful of men only. He had left Lucknow and started towards Ruhelkhand on 31 January. Lucknow was occupied by the English 'without obstruction' in the third week of March. The subahs of Avadh and Allahabad were now under effective British occupation. The work of the settlement of the two provinces was taken up in right earnest, and for this purpose General Carnac, who had become commander-in-chief in the meantime, took up his residence in the nawab's palace at Faizabad.⁴³

After his retreat from Lucknow Shuja had been flying for protection, beseeching aid now of the Ruhelas, now of the Bangashes, and then of the Marathas. Having failed twice, he believed that the task of overcoming the intrepid English was beyond his unaided strength. So he endeavoured to form a coalition of several important chiefs to drive out the English, whom he represented as cherishing designs on the Mughal empire. At Anup-Shahar some Maratha officers promised him assistance and entered into an agreement with him: but neither Najib Khan, nor the Ruhelas nor the Bangashes joined his proposed anti-English confederacy. On the advice of the exiled ev-wazir Imdad-ul-mulk he entered into an alliance with Mallu Rao Holkar. His assistance was to be purchased by the cession of the parganahs which Safdar Jang had made over to him in 1752 but which had been re-annexed to Avadh after the Maratha defeat at Panipat. This was to be supplemented by payment of 30,000 rupees per day for expenses, and the payment of 15 lakhs after the anticipated defeat of the English. Further, the wazir promised to associate the Marathas with the administration of the empire. On the basis of this arrangement Holkar joined him with 30,000 troops.

The allied army arrived in the neighbourhood of Kora some time in the third week of April (1765) and occupied this town of medieval importance from the local faujdar, Mirza Najaf Khan. Towards the close of April General Carnac came with the main body of the English army in the vicinity of Kora Jahanabad. A battle took place

⁴³ Bengal Secret Consultations, II, 425, 661-64, 679-81, 715-17, 737-56, 768-70, 782; III, 8-9, 11-15, 36, 41-44, 75-78, 127-31, 158-59, 188, 232-35, 273, 284-86, 298, CPC, I, 2453, 2458, 2458, 2459, 2467-70, 2472-77, 2482-83. *Siyār*, II, 751, 752, 764, 766-68. Ghulam Ali, II, 185, 187.

near Kora on 3 May. The Marathas, being defeated, fled towards Kalpi. The wazir fled towards Farrukhabad, hotly pursued by Fletcher. The Marathas were again defeated by Fletcher near Kalpi on 22 May. The actions at Kora and Kalpi were not battles, not even well-matched skirmishes; they were mere routs.⁴⁴

CLIVE'S TREATY WITH SHUJA

On reaching Farrukhabad Shuja realized that it would be utterly futile to try his luck again with a handful of mercenaries. He decided to throw himself absolutely on the mercy of the English. So long the Calcutta authorities were not prepared for peace unless the wazir had complied with their original demands in toto. But now the far-sighted statesmanship of Clive, who had landed at Calcutta as governor of Bengal on 3 May 1765, and who clearly saw that none but Shuja could convert Avadh into an effective buffer state against the Marathas, coupled with General Carnac's pacific intentions, produced a change in their angle of vision. Shuja's decision to offer unconditional surrender prepared the ground for complete cessation of hostilities and readiness of the parties to come to a friendly settlement. It is obvious that the English policy at the time did not aim at permanent occupation of the subahs of Avadh and Allahabad; the assumption of responsibility of direct administration of such extensive territories would be an experiment which had not yet been tried even in Bengal and was beyond the Company's capacity. The main objects of the English were two, *viz.* the punishment of their enemies (Mir Qasim and others) and the protection of their western frontier. Carnac was firmly of opinion that if Shuja were restored to his dominions he would 'prove a much better security to our frontier than any one we can put in these dominions in his room'.⁴⁵ Accordingly he welcomed Shuja's offer and received him at Jajmau on 26 May 1765.

Carnac's diplomacy smoothed the way for Clive, who concluded a formal treaty with Shuja at Allahabad on 16 August 1765. By the first article of this treaty 'perpetual and universal peace, sincere friendship and firm union' were established between the two contracting parties. The second article laid down that in case of invasion of the dominions of any one party by a third party the other should help him with a part or the whole of his forces. "In case of

⁴⁴ Bengal Secret Consultations, III, 284. SPD, XXIX, 90, 68. *Siyar*, II, 787-88. Ghulam Ali, II, 212-13. *Khulasat*, 149b-50b. 'Imād, 97-98. Brome, *Bengal Army*, I, 512-14.

⁴⁵ Bengal Select Committee Proceedings, 11 June 1765, 53-54.

the English Company's forces being employed in His Highness' service, the extraordinary expense of the same is to be defrayed by him." Nothing was, however, mentioned regarding the expenses of the wazir's troops if they were employed on a similar mission in the Company's service. On several other points Shuja had to make important concessions. He agreed never to entertain or receive Mir Qasim, Samru or any other European deserter from the Company and to deliver up all future European deserters from the Company to the English authorities. He bound himself to cede the districts of Kora and Allahabad to the emperor. He confirmed Balwant Singh of Banaras in possession of the entire zamindari which he possessed at the time of his joining the English on the condition of paying him the same revenue as heretofore. He agreed to pay to the Company a war indemnity of 50 lakhs in several instalments within 13 months from the date of the treaty. The fort of Chunar was to remain in possession of the English until the last instalment of the indemnity was paid. The wazir allowed the Company to trade duty free in his country. He undertook to forgive and not to molest those among his subjects who had in any way assisted the English in the late war. It was agreed that as soon as the treaty was executed all the Company's troops, except those necessary for garrisoning Chunar and for the protection of the emperor at Allahabad, should be withdrawn from Shuja's dominions.⁴⁶

In this treaty the observant eye can detect the germ of the subsidiary alliance, a policy which was extended and formalized later by Lord Wellesley. Though Shuja was nominally recognized as an ally with a status of equality with the Company at the time of the treaty, he became in effect a subordinate and protected ally, if not a tribute-paying vassal, and some of the provisions furnished a plausible plea for interference in his internal administration and even in some of his pet schemes. The result was that if not he, at least his successors, sank gradually but steadily into a position of positive inferiority to the Company's supreme agents in India, and eventually the later nawabs of Lucknow dwindled into mere tools in the hands of the governor-general and became his instruments.

It should be recognized, however, that in the circumstances in which Shuja found himself in 1765 he was lucky to get very favourable terms. The wisdom and farsightedness of English policy which dictated this lenient treatment cannot be adequately praised. But this leniency was not so much due to generosity for a fallen enemy as to the dictates of statesmanship. The Company's principal object

⁴⁶ India Office Consultations, 1765, 138-42.

at this juncture was the safety and permanence of its possessions in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa—an object which could be realized only by 'the formation of such a frontier as could give the best security against foreign invasion and afford necessary leisure for the introduction of important internal improvements'. None, Shah Alam not excepting, save Shuja with his natural talents, experience and hereditary position was thought to be 'capable of interposing an effective barrier' between those subahs and the Marathas who had long been anxious to acquire a foothold in them.⁴⁷ As Beveridge says, "To fit him for the part thus assigned to him, it was necessary not only to 'leave his strength unimpaired but to convince him, by generous treatment, that he could not advance his interest more effectually than by linking his fortunes with those of the Company and entering into close alliance with them."⁴⁸ It will thus be seen that it was not justice or generosity but policy that was really responsible for Shuja's restoration. This wise policy, though marred by an unbecoming attitude of jealousy and suspicion of Shuja's rising power on the part of Clive's immediate successors, was abundantly justified by its results. On the whole Avadh continued to remain to the end a faithful ally of the Company.

SHUJA AND THE ENGLISH, 1765-72 : TREATY OF BANARAS

After his restoration Shuja reorganized his army, training and disciplining his troops after the western model and equipping them with up-to-date weapons, specially guns and firelocks of European design, calibre and efficiency.⁴⁹ The number and strength of his force, which was now for the most part composed of trained infantry, supplemented by mobile cavalry and a powerful park of artillery, excited the jealousy and suspicion of his English allies, who imagined that his military preparations in times of peace and tranquillity could have no other object except a war of revenge against the Company. So they endeavoured to bring about a reduction in the strength of his army by diplomacy and persuasion and, failing that, by the threat of arms. Rumours of an impending conflict between the wazir and the English were regularly communicated to Calcutta by Richard Smith who commanded the Company's brigade at Allahabad. Shuja believed that these rumours were mischievously propagated by his enemies and demanded an inquiry into the whole affair. Contemporary evidence reveals the existence of a conspiracy

⁴⁷ Bengal Select Committee Proceedings, 13 December 1768.

⁴⁸ A Comprehensive History of India, I, 695.

⁴⁹ CPC, II, 346, 407, 618.

against him in which the leading roles were played by Munir-ud-daulah, the emperor's representative, and to a lesser extent by Shah Alam himself, and Smith only became a willing tool in their hands. There is no reason to suppose that Shuja was really or secretly hostile to the English. There is not a single sentence in his huge correspondence with Verelst, other English officers and his own agents at Calcutta and other Indian notables that might be construed to mean that he was against the English and was preparing to overthrow their power in Bengal.

Acting probably under Smith's pressure (Smith took his seat on the Calcutta Select Committee in April 1768) the good-natured but weak governor Verelst agreed to penalize Shuja for his supposed disloyalty to the Company. On 3 August 1768 the Select Committee resolved to check his military strength by diplomacy and failing that, by force.⁵⁰ A deputation consisting of Cartier, Smith and Russell was sent to adjust matters to the satisfaction of both the parties. Shuja, worried and vexed, realized his helpless position. He met the deputation at Banaras, where a new treaty was forced on him on 29 November 1768. The treaty of 1765 was confirmed, 'letter by letter and article by article'; but an explanatory clause was added, by which Shuja agreed not to entertain an army of more than 35,000 men, including troops of all classes, whether sepoys, cavalry, peons, artillery men, rocket men or soldiers of any other denominations whatever.⁵¹ By a separate agreement he undertook to disband all the troops then entertained by him exceeding the prescribed number, i.e. 35,000. This promise of disbandment was not faithfully complied with, but no addition was made to the number he possessed at the time of concluding the treaty. The net result was, therefore, that the Avadh army's growth was temporarily checked and Shuja had to give up the policy of building a really formidable force for four years and a half, after which the ban was lifted by Warren Hastings.

According to the seventh clause of the treaty of Allahabad the English had bound themselves to evacuate the fort of Chunar and restore it to Shuja after he had paid off in full the war indemnity of 50 lakhs. Payment was completed in June 1767, two months before the due date. Protracted negotiations failed to secure the restoration of the fort, and by an agreement dated 20 March 1772 Shuja was virtually compelled to cede the fort to his allies. Again, on the eve of his departure to Delhi Shah Alam conferred the fort of

⁵⁰ Bengal Select Committee Proceedings, 3 August, 10 August, 14 August, 13 September 1768.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 4 January, 25 January 1769.

Allahabad upon the wazir; but the English refused to surrender it, and the above agreement made them for all practical purposes masters of Allahabad also. The English policy regarding these two forts was governed by considerations of expediency and can be defended only on the ground that the two forts had a special strategic importance. Morally and politically they had no right to deprive the wazir of these forts.

SHUJA AND SHAH ALAM, 1765-72

Ever since they had come to parting of ways after the battle of Buxar there was no love lost between the titular emperor and his wazir. The bitterness of feeling, kept alive by the emperor's actually blessing the English war against Shuja, was further accentuated by the treaty of Allahabad which, while it tore two fertile districts (Kora and Allahabad) out of Shuja's dominions to provide a means of subsistence for Shah Alam, at the same time gave the emperor cause for disappointment as the wazir's timely submission totally ruined his prospect of securing the entire Avadh territories. There was an outward patching up at Clive's instance in July 1766, and as a sequel to it Shuja was re-appointed wazir.

What he received was no more than an empty designation. Apart from the restricted importance of the dignity, whatever work still pertained to the office, such as the management of court affairs, the emperor's relations with the English and the Indian powers, was actually in the hands of the deputy wazir Munir-ud-daulah, a supple courtier in high favour both with the emperor and the English. It was Shuja's cherished object to have full control over the imperial court as *de facto* wazir and to function as the real medium of transaction of court business with the English as also with other powers. He was anxious that the tribute paid to the emperor from Bengal should pass through his hands and that the world should look upon him as the sole manager of what yet remained of the dwindled empire. But in view of Shah Alam's aversion for him and Munir's complete hold over his mind, it was not possible for Shuja to occupy his rightful place at the court.

In this difficulty the wazir cleverly sought the intercession of the English. He made it appear to the Calcutta authorities that his restoration to full power at the imperial court was essential for safeguarding and furthering the Company's interests as much as his own. Verily he chose the right instrument and in the end a year and a half's exertion was crowned with success. The deputation which imposed on Shuja the treaty of 1768 also effected a reconcilia-

tion between him and the emperor. The reconciliation was so complete that Shah Alam gave the wazir his full confidence and friendship, besides the full powers of his office. The principal cause that influenced Shah Alam's decision in favour of Shuja's reinstatement was the strong and unwavering support given to Shuja by the English authorities in Bengal, especially Verelst, whom the titular emperor could not afford to displease.⁵²

From 1769 onwards it was the emperor's earnest effort to enlist Shuja's active support in the realization of the greatest ambition of his life, *i.e.* to install himself on his ancestral throne and revive the old glories of the broken empire. He was convinced that the English did not mean to afford him assistance for this purpose and, therefore, he resolved to undertake the projected expedition to Delhi with the help of the wazir and of such other vassals as were likely to respond to his call. The wazir was clever enough to exploit the emperor's eagerness and exact from him a heavy price for his proffered services. An agreement, concluded in April 1769, bound the wazir to 'attend the victorious stirrup' of the emperor for two years, and secured from the emperor several important concessions for him.⁵³ But the English continued to dissuade the emperor from marching to Delhi.

When the emperor began negotiations with the Marathas Shuja did not give his whole-hearted support to the scheme for fear of offending the English who were opposed to it. When the emperor finally decided to rely on the Marathas Shuja found himself between the devil and the deep sea. As wazir it was clearly his duty not only to accord his hearty assistance to the emperor but also to attend the expedition in person; he had pledged both in the agreement of April 1769. But self-interest and friendship for the English required him to refrain from accompanying the emperor. He furnished Shah Alam with a loan of 12 lakhs of rupees in cash and supplied transport carts, camels, elephants, horses, tents and arms. He also nominated Immat Bahadur with 5,000 horse, 5,000 foot and 5 pieces of cannon to conduct the emperor to Delhi. He personally followed the emperor as far as Jajmau near Kanpur.⁵⁴ Henceforth the wazir had no part to play in the fortunes of the unhappy emperor.

⁵² Bengal Select Committee Proceedings, 25 January 1769, CPC, II, 1335. Harcharan, 501a.

⁵³ Bengal Select Committee Proceedings, 1769, 271-80. CPC, II, 1906, 1367, 1369.

⁵⁴ CPC, III, 193, 250, 286-89, 319, 321, 330, 658, 695, 717, 720, 746, 747, 798, 810.

CHAPTER FIVE

RUHELKHAND AND FARRUKHABAD

THE FOUNDATION OF the two states of Ruhelkhand and Farrukhabad ruled by Pathan chiefs in the heart of northern India resulted from the disintegration of the Mughal empire after the death of Aurangzib. The civil wars for succession to the throne and a series of incompetent rulers following one after the other weakened the central authority in Delhi. Palace intrigues of a degenerate nobility, pampered in luxury, and their interminable contests for power further lowered the prestige of the empire; the provincial governors were emboldened to defy imperial prohibitions, to gradually shake off the central authority, and to establish their independence. The imperial court had become a hot-bed of intrigue, profligacy and luxury. Career was not open to talent. Vice and sloth had driven out efficiency and fidelity. Merit was eclipsed by corruption and immorality. In the circumstances, capable and efficient men had to look somewhere outside the court for appreciation and remuneration. Adventure sought profit in defiance of the central government. All classes of lawless men began to raise their heads, and states big or small were carved out even in the neighbourhood of the capital. The states of Ruhelkhand and Farrukhabad also owned their rise to the prevailing conditions. The rise of these states was a symptom of the declining power of Delhi, a sequel of disintegration. Their end came when centripetal forces began once again to assert themselves and they succumbed to the growing power of the East India Company.

Farrukhabad was assigned by the emperor Farrukh-siyar to Muhammad Khan Bangash, a soldier of fortune in the imperial service, as a faujdari. His father came from Roh during the reign of Aurangzib and settled in the district of Farrukhabad. Here Muhammad was born in 1665. Starting his career as a freebooter he rose to be the leader of the Pathan freebooters in the locality. He joined Farrukh-siyar in 1712 with 4,000 or 5,000 men on the recommendation of the Sayyid brothers. After victory he was granted land in Bundelkhand and in the district of Farrukhabad. He founded Far-

rukhabad and named it after Farrukh-siyar.¹ This Bangash chief remained loyal to his imperial master, but the diminishing central control operated to make him and his successors increasingly autonomous in their exercise of authority. The faujdari developed into an independent state owing to the inanition of the central power.

The state of Ruhelkhand was carved out by an adventurer who defied imperial authority and built up his power by fighting the officers of the government and the hereditary landowners. The province of Katehar became the abode of the Ruhelas and for some time continued to be the rallying point for the Pathans. Daud Khan Ruhela laid the foundations on which Ali Muhammad Khan built up the structure of an independent state.

KATEHAR. ADOPTED HOME OF RUHELAS

Katchar, the original name of the province occupied by the Ruhelas, situated on the left bank of the Ganges and stretching to the foot of the Himalayas, had been from antiquity the home of independent Rajput chiefs who were traditionally turbulent and defiant of central authority. The pre-Mughal rulers of Delhi had to face their constant revolts and were seldom able to collect revenues without the use of the army.² In its brighter days Mughal power made an impression and insurrections were rare. But in the last days of Aurangzib rebellion raised its head again,³ and when he died "all Rohilkhand was in a state of complete anarchy".⁴ Civil wars in the days of his successors further weakened the hold of the central government and there commenced an unending war for lands and boundaries among the various zamindars and revolt against the authority of the faujdar.

Administratively the province was divided into two sarkars with a faujdar for each at Muradabad and Bareli. Besides, the important town of Shahjahanpur, though forming part of the faujdari of Bareli, was the seat of the successors of Bahadur Khan Daudzai,⁵ and a stronghold of the Pathan power. The tarai lands were administered by the raja of Kumaun who was exercising independent sway there. Thus the authority of the representative of the central government

¹ Walimullah *Tārīkh-i-Farrukhabād*, 45, 46. *Mas'ir-ul-umāra*, text, III, 771-74.

² Nasir-ud-din Mahmud, Ghiyas-ud-din Balban and Firuz Tughluq had to suppress rebellions in Katehar. (*Tabqat-i-Nāsirī*, Kabul edition, 1963, 488. *Tārīkh-i-Firuz Shahī*, 58-59. *Tārīkh-i-Farkhītā*, 148.)

³ Muhammad Kazim, *'Alamgīr-nāmā*, 126, 589.

⁴ Cf. Shiv Das, *Shāh-nāmā Munawwar-Qalam*, 79a.

⁵ He rose into prominence during the reign of Shah Jahan. (*Lahori, Bādschāh Nāma*, II, 273.)

was limited and little felt or respected. Even the main land was parcelled out into a number of big estates held by zamindars who cared little for the faujdar. These were Narpat Singh of Pipla,⁶ Kirat Singh of Akbarabad,⁷ Kunjan Singh of Raipur,⁸ Khem Karan of Ratangarh,⁹ Madar Shah of Mudkar¹⁰ and Arjun Singh of Aonla.¹¹ They fought among themselves even for small strips of land and for this purpose employed their peasants or engaged mercenaries to fight their battles. Foreign adventurers with their small followings were in constant demand; they hired themselves for money. They augmented their income by plunder and very often acquired villages and grew into zamindars themselves. Katehar had become a scene of constant civil strife which weakened the government and dissipated the resources of the Rajput zamindars whose inability for combined action made them easy victims of unscrupulous adventurers.

DAUD KHAN RUHELA

In such a situation, at the beginning of the reign of Bahadur Shah, an Afghan or Pathan adventurer, Daud Khan Ruhela, began his career in Katehar. Mystery surrounds his origin. All that can be said is that he was either a slave or an adopted son¹² of Shah Alam Khan, the youngest son of Shaikh Moti Baba, the *sajjadānashīn* of Tor Shahamat in Afghan territory near the Indian border, and father of Hafiz Rahmat Khan. Shah Alam frequently visited India on commercial ventures as a horse-dealer. He had educated Daud Khan who could not reconcile himself to the rural surroundings of his rugged homeland and sought a wide field for his talent and military ardour in the war-distracted land of Hindustan. No definite account is available about his early doings in this country. The story related in *'Imad-us-Sa'ādat* may be indicative of his original pursuits. It states that he started his career as a horse-dealer in the fair of Hardwar where some more Ruhelas gathered round him and soon he developed into a highwayman who pursued a rich Hindu pilgrim and plundered his property. With this booty he entered the thick forests on the route to Bareli and continued his predatory

⁶ Probably modern Pipli Naik, 8 miles north of Muradabad (Atkinson, N.W.P. Gazetteer, IX, 207).

⁷ About 18 miles north of Bijnor (Atkinson, V, 379).

⁸ Now called Rajpura, district Badaun (Atkinson, V, 192).

⁹ Probably modern Ratanpur Kalan, 6 miles south-west of Muradabad (Atkinson, IX, 207).

¹⁰ Identification is uncertain. Whiteway calls it Maoka (Atkinson, IX, 207.)

¹¹ About 17 miles from Bareli (Atkinson, V, 696).

¹² Cf. Hafiz Rahmat Khan *Khulāsat-ul-Anwāh*, 12b; *Gulistān-i-Rahmat*, 3a; *Tārikh-i-Farah Baksh*, 12a; Hamilton, *History of the Rohilla Afghans*, 33.

activities. He succeeded in organizing a following of 80 horsemen and 300 footsoldiers and built a mud fortress.¹³ It is difficult to vouch the veracity of this statement, but it verges on plausibility and can pass for a possible occupation of an adventurer who had come to Hindustan to seek a career. His aim was to settle in this country. Fortune seems to have favoured him and he adopted Katehar, the province nearest to Hardwar, as the field for his adventures.

Daud Khan gradually collected a large following of similarly placed Pathans, who swarmed the plains of north India like ravenous vultures in search of prey and soon became a terror of the land. From his mud fortress he preyed on the petty zamindars of the neighbourhood and acquired a name for bravery. His services were soon sought by the contending zamindars and he was employed by Madar Shah of Mudkar. A few villages were assigned to him for the maintenance of his new Ruhela contingent.¹⁴ In the service of this patron he acquired fame as a brave adventurer to whose standards flocked more Pathans. He was the hero of many raids and fights in the villages of Katehar, in one of which—against Khem Karan of Ratangarh—he plundered the village of Bakauli.¹⁵ There he is reported to have captured a Jat boy of about eight years whom he brought up as his son and named Ali Muhammad Khan,¹⁶ who lived to be his successor and the founder of the state of Ruhelkhand. Some chronicles have associated him with the murder of Shah Alam Khan,¹⁷ who seems to have come frequently to him and who desired him to relinquish his career here and return to Roh. Passion and prejudice have so far affected this story that it is difficult to extricate truth from partisanship. The incident has no value for the history of the land. Daud Khan soon left the service of Madar Shah to seek a wider scope for his talent and joined Azmatullah Khan, the faujdar of Muradabad, in expectation of royal favour and more lucrative employment in the imperial service. He farmed the revenues of some villages from the government and passed his days in prosperity with his followers.¹⁸

13 *'Imād-us-Sa'ādat*, 40.

14 Hamilton, 33-34.

15 In pargana Kabar, tahsil Baheri, district Bareh (Atkinson, V, 772).

16 *'Imād*, 40. *Gūlstān-i-Rahmat*, 7a. According to *Hudqat-ul-Aqā'īm* (139) and *Tārikh-i-Farah Bakhsh* (12b) Ali Muhammad was the son of Daud Khan. Hamilton (35) doubts the theory of Hindu origin on the ground that Muslims seldom or never adopt a Hindu.

17 *Gūlstān-i-Rahmat*, 9a. Muhammad Hasan Raza Khan acquits Daud Khan of the charge (*Akhbār-i-Hasan*, 12).

18 *Gūlstān-i-Rahmat*, 10b, 11a.

The next phase of his career is associated with the ruler of Kumaun, raja Debi Chand, who had succeeded to the gadi in 1720. Daud Khan was appointed commander of his forces stationed at Kashipur. Possessed of a large army and conscious of the weakness of the empire, Debi Chand's ambition appears to have been directed towards acquiring the tarai lands which lay to the south of his dominions. An opportunity presented itself when the pretender Sabir Shah raised the standard of revolt in the tarai lands and, collecting a large band of Pathans, invaded Katehar. He was repulsed by Azmatullah Khan. Sabir Shah then sought the help of Debi Chand who was promised the province of Katchar when the pretender was seated on the throne of Delhi. Exaggerating his power, the raja joined the conspiracy and proclaimed Sabir Shah the emperor of India. Daud Khan was ordered to his aid. The central government deputed Azmatullah Khan to quell the disturbance. The faujdar came to the field with 15,000 men and 12 elephants. He took the precaution also of tampering with the fidelity of Daud Khan who was secretly bribed to desert his employer when the engagement had begun. When the two armies met at Nagina, Daud Khan treacherously left the field and stood aside to watch the event. The forces of Kumaun were routed. The story of this treachery was communicated to Debi Chand, who feigning ignorance, invited the Pathan commander to his court, increased his pay and succeeded in beguiling his confidence. Then followed the retribution. His legs were ordered to be cut off and the sinews to be drawn out till he died. Thus ended, in 1724 or 1725, the stormy career of a bold adventurer.¹⁹ His family continued to enjoy the patronage of Azmatullah Khan who took Ali Muhammad into service in consideration of Daud's sacrifice.

ALI MUHAMMAD RULES A FAIRLY CAREER

Ali Muhammad had received good military training under his adoptive father and being adept in the use of arms and riding, he was preferred in leadership by Daud's followers to the natural son of the deceased. The young chief had a body of four or five hundred Pathans under his command. With this force he entered the service of the imperial officer. For the maintenance of this force he was given some villages, including Bunea Beoli, the mud fortress of Daud Khan, and he supplemented his income by farming the revenues of

¹⁹ This account is based on *Gulstān-i-Rahmat*, *Akhbār-i-Hasan* and the Gazetteers of Muradabad, Bijnor and Bareli. But *Tārikh-i-Farah Bakhsh* and some other sources place Sabir Shah's rebellion in 1726 and Daud Khan's death in 1721-22. Hence Daud Khan's participation in the rebellion is not free from doubt.

some neighbouring villages. His force was daily increasing, for he had become the rallying centre of the roaming Pathans, and he used his power with advantage by making raids on the villages of the zamindars in the neighbourhood. The first few years were devoted to building up his power during which he was able to capture the parganah of Manauna²⁰ which belonged to Umdat-ul-mulk Amir Khan, the paymaster of the imperial forces, by defeating and slaying his agent Khwajah Sahib. He also captured Aonla which became the seat of his power. In all these transactions he was assured of the support of Azmatullah Khan. By 1730 he had acquired sufficient strength to be approached by Muhammad Khan Bangash for help against Chhatrasal of Bundelkhand, which he readily rendered.²¹

Further promotion depended on seeking the patronage of some influential noble at the imperial court. Ali Muhammad was able to get the powerful support of Qamr-ud-din Khan, the wazir of the empire, through the mediation of his friend, the faujdar of Moradabad. He got some parganahs in revenue farm from the wazir and other fief-holders. The protection of the highest dignitary of the empire gave him a status. He was now able to live in splendour and greatly augment his military power. This patronage of the enemy of the paymaster by the wazir was an eloquent proof of jealousy and faction at the court which precipitated the decline of the empire.

His connection with the wazir was fruitful of further honours. In 1737 his services were requisitioned by the latter in suppressing the rebellious conduct of Saif-ud-din Khan, the head of the Savyids of Barha, and brother of the famous Savyid king-makers. Saif-ud-din had not been on cordial terms with the emperor Muhammad Shah and had killed Hashmat Khan, faujdar of Saharanpur. An imperial force under Azimullah Khan, brother of the wazir, was sent against Jansath, the seat of the Savyids, and Ali Muhammad Khan was also ordered to render assistance to the imperial commander. This opportunity was taken by the Ruhela to signify his devotion to his patron. In the contest the Sayvid's troops had almost repulsed the imperial forces, when Ali Muhammad rushed with his followers in great numbers and routed the defenders. Saif-ud-din Khan was killed, the town of Jansath was sacked, and the power of the Savyids broken for ever. This achievement made the Ruhela leader renowned for bravery and generalship, and it was suitably rewarded by the wazir

²⁰ Manauna is a village 2 miles to the west of Aonla, district Bareli (*Gazetteer of Bareli*, 239).

²¹ *Guldatān-i-Rahmat*, 11b, 12b, *Tārikh-i-Farah Bakhsh*, 12b, 13ab, *Akhbār-i-Hasan* 15, *Imād*, 42, *Irvine, Later Mughals* II, 230.

by the conferment of a mansab and the title of nawab with the right to keep standard and drums. There is no mention of this grant in the official chronicles of the reign of Muhammad Shah. Hence it is difficult to ascertain its exact nature. It is likely that the mansab was a minor one,²² perhaps commensurate with the service performed, as the victim of imperial wrath was a mere petty zamindar. Nevertheless it accorded him a legal recognition, for he could now be considered as a part of the hierarchy of the state officers and not a mere adventurer.

During the next few years Ali Muhammad's position grew stronger. He had secured a few khalsa villages from the state in lieu of his recent service. He was also able to gain some villages from the local officials. Thus he had in his possession a large holding.²³ At the same time, to him flocked large hordes of Pathans from the Afghan borders, who had to leave their homeland owing to the severities of Nadir Shah, and who, according to *Siyār-ul-mutākhkharīn*, "flocking at random upon the ocean of incertitude and despair, were glad to hear of a place of refuge and shelter, and they resorted in shoals to a man who had already acquired so much renown under the name of Rohilla, which was that of one of their clans".²⁴ Thus in a very short time his army grew in numbers and included some brave soldiers. One of the most notable arrivals was Hafiz Rahmat Khan, son of Daud Khan's patron, Shah Alam Khan, whom Ali Muhammad had repeatedly invited. He was given twelve villages for his maintenance. With this modest foothold he began to take a leading part in the affairs of Kutchar.

ALI MUHAMMAD AND MUGHAL GOVERNMENT

Nadir Shah's stormy career had not only helped to augment the following of Ali Muhammad, but also stimulated his desire to repudiate the imperial authority. Nadir's invasion of India in 1739 activated the centrifugal forces which prompted the provinces to throw off the central yoke. The emperor had neither the resources nor the will to bring them back to allegiance. Ali Muhammad also noted this weakness and being well aware of the supineness of the wazir neglected sending the usual remittances to the exchequer.²⁵ Though

²² *Gulistān-i-Rahmat*, 13a, 14b. *Tārikh-i-Farah Baksh*, 13a, 14b. *Shakir*, 33. *Siyār*, 853. *Hudqat*, 139. Some authorities mention a mansab of 5000 with the title of nawab and the right to keep standard and drum.

²³ *Gulistān-i-Rahmat*, 13b. *Siyār*, 853.

²⁴ *Siyār*, 853.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

this did not amount to assumption of independence at that stage, yet it did point to his eventual ambition and his actions, soon after, afford confirmation of this view.

Apparently this contumacy excited the resentment of the court authorities, and it seems the wazir was prevailed upon to demand an explanation from the Ruhela chief whose presence was asked for at the court to settle cases which 'have come up before his Majesty'.²⁶ Ali Muhammad did not deem it proper to go personally to the capital; he sent his diwan Jai Sukh Rai, who reached Delhi on 15 November 1741. The adroit diwan was able to lull the suspicions of the wazir and a favourable settlement of the matter was arranged. Payment of the arrears of revenue was promised to be made in Muradabad. This did not satisfy raja Harnand, just then appointed deputy governor of Muradabad, who was keen on immediate payment. It is reported that he had tried to prevent the return of Jai Sukh Rai, but the latter was able to reach Aonla on 10 January 1742, after settling the accounts with Niyaz Bek Khan, the raja's deputy at Muradabad.²⁷

How far this settlement was deemed to be satisfactory is not clear for, soon after preparations were being made by the raja for the chastisement of Ali Muhammad Khan.²⁸ The Ruhela chronicles ascribe malevolent intentions to the raja who is credited with the desire to root out the Ruhela power and earn merit and reward for himself.²⁹ Jealousy against Jai Sukh Rai, chagrin at the neglect of Ali Muhammad to interview the raja, and commission from the emperor to punish the Ruhela, have all been alleged to be the causes of the conflict between the two. *Siyār-ul-mutākkharīn* has even mentioned that the pride of his position and his insulting behaviour towards the Ruhela prompted the latter to oppose him.³⁰ It is, however, clear from the accounts that Ali Muhammad did not desire hostilities and tried to secure an amicable settlement of the dispute. He had even sought the good offices of Muhammad Khan Bangash of Farrukhabad to intercede on his behalf. The Bangash had requested both the wazir and Harnand for a settlement which was not granted. Harnand is reputed to have been deaf to all such proposals and determined on a struggle. He had undoubtedly the authority of the wazir for his actions, for he was permitted the use of the royal park of artillery and the assistance of Munir-ud-daulah, son of the wazir.

²⁶ *Gulistān-i-Rahmat*, 16b. *Akhbār-us-Sanadid*, 123.

²⁷ *Najm-ul-Ghant*, 124 26.

²⁸ *Gul-i-Rahmat*, 15.

²⁹ *Gulistān-i-Rahmat*, 17a. *Tārikh-i-Farah Baksh*, 15a.

³⁰ *Siyār*, 853. *Hadiqat*, 139-140. *'Imād*, 42 43.

The raja had also secured the help of many local zamindars, fief-holders and the faujdar of Bareli, Abdul Bari Khan.³¹

All these point to the fact that Harnand had been acting under the orders of the emperor, who must have given him instructions to chastise the Ruhelas as the nobles in the court who had their fiefs in Katehar were clamouring for action against Ali Muhammad. It could not have been an independent action of the raja. The conduct of the Ruhela chief must have been of serious gravity to arouse the resentment of the court which was not otherwise at this date characterized by activity and boldness of design.

Raja Harnand did not wait for reinforcements, but marched against the Ruhela with a force numbering about 25,000 men. He encamped at Dal Amlah on the river Arail waiting for Ali Muhammad, who left Aonla on 8 March 1742 and took position near the former place. The Ruhela forces did not exceed ten or twelve thousand men and were ill-provided with artillery. But this deficiency was more than compensated by the determination of the soldiery and superiority of generalship. Ali Muhammad was supported by Hafiz Rahmat Khan, Dundi Khan, Painda Khan and other Ruhela sardars, all in command of the different wings of his army.³²

A few days passed in abortive negotiations for peace. Ultimately on 15 March 1742 Ali Muhammad decided to take the field and, taking advantage of the element of surprise, defeated the opposing forces. Raja Harnand was caught unawares; being told by his astrologers that the day was not auspicious for battle, he was busy in his devotions when Ali Muhammad's host burst into his camp. He hurriedly mounted an elephant but was killed by an arrow. His son and Abdul Nabi Khan were also killed along with him. Ali Muhammad was now the master of the field; he came into possession of a vast booty, including many pieces of artillery, tents and other camp equipage, and treasure. But more important than this acquisition was the rise in his prestige; this victory enhanced his military reputation and brought him the support of the neighbouring chiefs. Munir-ud-daulah who was still beyond the Ganges could not muster courage to attack the rebel. The wazir also could not afford a further depletion of imperial authority by indulging in military operations of uncertain consequence. He adopted the means of negotiation and sent his son to demand satisfaction. Ali Muhammad made suitable

31 Cf. Bhagwan Das, 'Aziz-ul-Qulub', 22a-23b.

32 Different authorities give different estimates of the numerical strength of the Ruhela army. (*Qullstān-i-Rahmat*, 17a. *Khazdnā-i-Amrā*, 60-61. Atkinson, II, Part II, 147.)

presents and tendered assurances of loyalty and service. The wazir thereupon left entire Katchar to be governed by the Ruhela.³³

ALI MUHAMMAD: EXTENSION OF TERRITORY

Henceforth the power of Ali Muhammad was unrivalled in the region of Katehar, and he was soon in a position to extend his authority by occupying all territories up to the Himalayas. The old revenue collectors were expelled from Muradabad, Sambhal and Shahjahanpur. Pilibhit was conquered from its Banjara chief, Despat. Many other landlords met similar fate. The rule of the Ruhela was established over the whole region of Katehar, where according to the contemporary chroniclers Islamic custom and law were made current.³⁴ The new state was intended to promote the happiness of the Pathans. The Hindus must have viewed with dismay the rise of the adventurer's state which meant political subjection and religious degradation for them.

The next stage in the successful career of this adventurer was the invasion and conquest of Kumaun. His possessions touched the Ganges on one side and ran parallel to Avadh on the east. In the north, however, the natural hill-frontier had not yet been attained as the tarai lands were held by the raja of Kumaun. The desire for natural frontiers prompted Ali Muhammad to seek hostilities with the ruler of Almora. An occasion came in 1743 when one Duli Chand, an official of raja Kalvan Chand, sought shelter at Aonla from the persecution of his ruler and begged for assistance from the Ruhela chief to avenge his wrongs. Ali Muhammad grabbed at the invitation and sent an army under Hafiz Rahmat Khan to invade Kumaun.

The raja offered resistance, but the sturdy Ruhelas waving aside all impediments reached Almora and invested it. The raja was frightened and secretly left his palace with his followers. The city fell to the invaders and was mercilessly sacked. Hafiz Rahmat occupied the palace and invited Ali Muhammad Khan who came when the rains were over. Kalvan Chand, meanwhile, had sought the aid of the raja of Garhwal, and the allied forces marched on Almora to expel the invaders. Ali Muhammad met them half-way, but the rajahs took fright and without engagement left the camp. The Ruhelas got immense booty, and moved against Srinagar, the capital of Garhwal. The ruler of that state soon sued for terms. On promise of allegiance to Ali Muhammad Khan and the payment of Rs 1,60,000 the Ruhela forces

³³ *Tārīkh-i-Farah Bakhsh*, 15a, 16a. *Gullistān-i-Rahmat*, 18a. *Khazāna-i-'Amrā*, 61. *Imād*, 42. *Hadiqat*, 140. *Siyār*, 853.

³⁴ *Gullistān-i-Rahmat*, 19a. *Siyār*, 853.

returned to Almora. After a few months Hafiz Rahmat left Kumaun owing to excessive cold to one of the officers of Kalyan Chand, but annexed the tarai lands which now formed part of the Ruhela possessions.³⁵ This acquisition made Ali Muhammad master of all territories north of the Ganges. His prestige and position had considerably increased. He had virtually established himself as an autonomous ruler in the neighbourhood of the imperial capital and was almost defying central authority.

ALI MUHAMMAD AND SAFDAR JANG

These successes and fresh acquisitions of territory could not fail to excite the jealousy and fears of Safdar Jang, the nawab of Avadh, who was naturally apprehensive lest the Ruhela should, in the flush of victory, turn his arms against the territories of his eastern neighbour. The existence of a strong unfriendly power on his north-west disturbed Safdar Jang, and he began to plot its annihilation. He instigated the emperor to chastise Ali Muhammad Khan.³⁶ The emperor, on his side, could not view with complacence the growing might of the Ruhela so close to the capital. The rout of Harnand, the invasion of Kumaun even without information to the emperor, and the retention of the booty acquired in the campaign together with the use of tents of red colour, which were traditionally associated with the emperor, made his conduct seem rebellious. While Safdar Jang might have been prompted by cupidity to acquire possession of Katehar to round off his territories, the emperor was genuinely roused to the danger to the state from the presence of such a powerful and successful adventurer so close to Delhi. He could not but suspect that the Ruhelas joined with the Bangash Afghans of Farrukhabad might form a solid bloc of Pathan power in the vicinity of the capital and make a bid for the imperial throne. It was the danger of a challenge to the supremacy of Delhi which roused Muhammad Shah from his usual lethargy and stupor and compelled him to take the field personally.

Thus Safdar Jang's jealousy and the emperor's resentment, together with the latter's genuine fears for the safety of the state, prompted military action against Ali Muhammad. The story given by Hamilton of the immediate occasion for war is plausible, though uncorroborated.³⁷ Border incidents between Avadh and Katehar must have been

³⁵ *Gulistan-i-Rahmat*, 19a-20a. *Gul-i-Rahmat*, 17-20. *Tarikh-i-Farah Bakhsh*, 16b. *Akhbar-i-Hasan*, 20. *Hadiqat*, 140. Hamilton (55) says that A' Muhammad personally led the expedition to Kumaun.

³⁶ *Gulistan*, 21b. *Gul-i-Rahmat*, 20. *Tarikh-i-Farah Bakhsh*, 18a. *Siyar*, 855.

³⁷ The occasion was a dispute between the Ruhelas and an officer of Safdar Jang.

frequent and Safdar Jang might have utilized some such incident to invoke the imperial wrath on the offending Ruhela whose lands were coveted by him and whose growing might on his borders was a cause of increasing alarm and anxiety. The expedition was undertaken at a moment when the imperial government was very weak and the treasury empty.³⁸ This fact lends support to the view that Ali Muhammad's growing power was recognized as a great danger to the state.

A strong army was recruited and influential chiefs like Safdar Jang, Amin Khan and the wazir himself accompanied the emperor. The cavalcade left Delhi on 11 February 1745 and was joined by Qaim Khan, son of Muhammad Khan Bangash, on the way.³⁹ The army continued its advance against the fort of Bangarh,⁴⁰ where Ali Muhammad Khan had taken refuge to resist the imperial attack. The Ruhela had many supporters in the hostile camp, particularly the wazir and Qaim Khan who could not countenance his destruction. It is mentioned by Anandram Mukhlis, the contemporary chronicler, that soon after the arrival of Qaim Khan attempts were made to bring about a peaceful settlement. Representatives of Ali Muhammad Khan were called, but the imperial demands were so exorbitant that no accommodation was possible. The emperor demanded a crore and half of rupees and the cession of all his possessions and artillery. Negotiations having failed, Bangarh was besieged.⁴¹

Ali Muhammad had not been quite at ease all this time. He had neither the means nor the will to defy imperial power at that stage. He could not be sure how far his own troops would dare to fight against the emperor. He had at one time decided to take refuge in Kumaun, but Qaim Khan exhorted him to remain in Aonla and meet the imperial forces with courage and equanimity, for otherwise it 'would infallibly prove the loss of the country'. He must also have been fortified by the expectation of support from his friends and particularly his patron the wazir, who was jealous of Safdar Jang and could not wish for the annihilation of the Ruhela power. Ali Muhammad assured them that it was 'not his intention to offer any

When the latter reported the matter to the emperor and Ali Muhammad was ordered to surrender the offenders he sent a haughty reply. (Hamilton, 58-60)

³⁸ Hamilton, 62. Safdar Jang undertook to spend one lakh of rupees daily when the imperial army was on march and Rs 50,000 daily when it halted. (*Târikh-i-Farah Bakhsh*, 18a.)

³⁹ *Safar Nâma*, 3, 55. According to Anandram the emperor started from Delhi on 25 April. The date given in *Siyâr* (855) is 2 April.

⁴⁰ Also called Yusfnagar, *narganah* Badaun, district Badaun (Atkinson, V, 106, 107).

⁴¹ *Safar Nâma*, 55. *Târikh-i-Farah Bakhsh*, 19a.

resistance to the mandates of the king⁴² and entreated that he might be admitted to the royal presence. But the exertions of the wazir on his behalf proved unavailing and he could not get the favour of royal audience. In his own town of Aonla his position was not quite secure as certain theologians had issued a proclamation forbidding the Muslims to fight against the emperor.⁴³ This naturally thinned his ranks, and he repaired to Bangarh which was best suited by its situation to stand a siege.

The siege was not characterized by any brilliant achievement. The imperial cannonade was half-hearted, while the night sallies of the besieged were unsuccessful. The Ruhelas kept behind the walls, and the imperial forces were unable to storm the fort owing to their dilatoriness. Excessive heat of the day, luxuriousness of the officers, disunion among the chiefs—all united to save the Ruhela from destruction. The wazir's jealousy of Safdar Jang prompted him to encourage Ali Muhammad to stand his ground. The other nobles to whom fighting was distasteful were all ready to make an accommodation with the Ruhela and thus get rid of the discomforts of the camp. All these factors saved Ali Muhammad and protracted the siege. But he was unable to resist long. Apprehensive of the failure of supplies and reassured of the support of his friends in the imperial camp, he decided to surrender. The negotiations were entrusted to his friend, the wazir, who persuaded the emperor to grant him pardon on the cession of all his possessions. This was agreed to, and an officer was sent to take possession of the entire property in the fort. Ali Muhammad presented himself at the court with his hands tied by a kerchief, as a token of submission. The emperor received him in full court, set his hands free and left him in the custody of the wazir. The imperial camp then began its return journey with the Ruhela as a prisoner, and arrived in the capital on 20 June.⁴⁴

This episode resulted in the temporary eclipse of the Ruhela power. Katehar became once again an imperial possession under the charge of Farid-ud-din Khan, son of Azmatullah Khan. Ali Muhammad's family repaired to Delhi. Hafiz Rahmat went over to Mau to live there, and other Ruhela chiefs also settled in various places. Their forces dispersed and awaited a better turn in their fortunes. This did not take long to come. Ali Muhammad was soon set free and honoured with appointment as faujdar of Sirhind.

42 *Tārikh-i-Farajī Baklūsh*, 19a.

43 *Ibd.*, 18b.

44 *Safar Nūma*, 58-66, 75, 78, 81. *Tārikh-i-Farajī Baklūsh*, 19ab. *Gulstān-i-Rahmat*, 22b, 23a. *Siyār*, 853. *Hadiqat*, 140.

ALI MUHAMMAD AT SIRHIND

At Sirhind Ali Muhammad was allotted a high position. His title as also the privilege of keeping kettle-drums and standard were restored; he was also given a mansab. He had also the right to keep his own army for which purpose he called Hafiz Rahmat Khan and many of his other followers to Sirhind, where he kept a big army mainly composed of his Ruhelas.

At that time this frontier faujdari was an important position and it is surprising why, in spite of his antecedents, Ali Muhammad was chosen to fill this post. The kindness of the wazir and the desire to appease the Afghan element at the court might have been responsible for it. There is no doubt that separated from his people and uprooted from his familiar soil, the Ruhela was considered to be harmless, specially when he would be so close to the capital and his two sons were kept as hostages.⁴⁵ The emperor had punished him because his power was considered to be a potential danger to the state in a region which had been traditionally associated with rebellion. The jealousy of Safdar Jang too was thus appeased, as in Sirhind the Ruhela could not be a danger to Avadh. His dashing courage and generalship as well as his experience in dealing with contumacious chiefs were assets which could be employed with advantage to the empire in bringing under submission the rebellious Jat landlords of Sirhind.

Ali Muhammad proved his worth in his new charge. During the sixteen months of his tenure, he subdued with a rough hand Bharamal,⁴⁶ Nigahamal⁴⁷ and Rai Calla,⁴⁸ three Jat landlords who had failed to pay the revenues. The submission of these three brought others to their knees and the chronicler records that soon his authority prevailed in the region and he was able to amass a large treasure and maintain a large force of Afghans who flocked to him from many quarters.

In 1747 came the first invasion of Ahmad Shah Abdali and with that synchronized the return of Ali Muhammad to Katehar. Some chroniclers advance the view that he took advantage of the situation and fled to his old charge where he re-established himself.⁴⁹ The contrary view has been put forward by Ruhela chroniclers who state

⁴⁵ *Siyār*, 867. *Khazāna-i-Āmirā*, 80. *Gulistān-i-Rahmat*, 22a-23a, 24a. *Tūrīkh-i-Farah Baksh*, 19b. *Akhbār-i-Hasan*, 24-25.

⁴⁶ Zamindar of Raipur (*Gulistān-i-Rahmat*, 24a).

⁴⁷ Sargiroh of Jotpur (*Ibid.*).

⁴⁸ Zamindar of Kot Rai Kala (*Ibid.*, *Akhbār-i-Hasan*, 28).

⁴⁹ *Siyār*, 865. *Tūrīkh-i-Farah Baksh*, 21b. *Imād*, 43. *Khazāna-i-Āmirā*, 80.

that Muhammad Shah could not afford to let the Ruhela with a strong army remain in Sirhind lest he should go over to the Afghan invader, and decided to restore him to his old possessions in Katchar, both to isolate him from the Abdali as well as to ensure his friendly attitude.⁵⁰ *Gul-i-Rahmat* refers to the receipt of a letter by Ali Muhammad from the Abdali offering him the wazirship of India in case he helped the foreigner against the emperor.⁵¹ It is mentioned that the Ruhela was inclined to be tempted by this prospect when orders for his restoration were received, but he preferred the certain advantage to an uncertain one.⁵² There is some plausibility in this story, for no mention is made in any chronicle of any resistance by imperial officers to the return of Ali Muhammad to Katchar and of his assumption of power there. It is improbable that he could have moved with all his forces to Katchar from Sirhind in opposition to the imperial wishes, particularly when the Indian forces were strong enough to drive the foreigner back into the Afghan highlands. Ali Muhammad came to Katchar by way of Ghandi-ghat, and soon re-established his authority by appointing his own officers in place of the imperial officers, who soon returned to Delhi.⁵³

He was not however destined to rule long. Soon after his return he lost his hearing and was seized by dropsy which not long after consumed his life. He died on 14 September 1748, leaving the concerns of the government in the hands of his chiefs, Hafiz Rahmat Khan, Daud Khan, Sardar Khan, Fath Khan etc.; others, as his sons then in Katchar were all minors, the two eldest ones having been taken away by the Abdali. Saadullah Khan, his son, was made his successor.⁵⁴ At that time the Ruhela power in Katchar was fully established. It had received the recognition of the imperial power

50 *Gulistan-i-Rahmat*, 28b-29a.

51 *Gulistan-i-Rahmat*, 29a. *Akhbar-i-Hasan*, 26. No other authority corroborates this statement and it seems to be a hypothesis initiated by the family historians of Hafiz Rahmat Khan.

52 Although the Ruhela sardars favoured union with the Abdali, the proposal was rejected by Ali Muhammad on the ground that the Afghan ruler would not stay in India for long and it would be imprudent to desert the emperor of Hindustan. (*Gulistan-i-Rahmat*, 29a.)

53 *Siyār*, 887. *Gulistan-i-Rahmat*, 30a-31a. *Tarikh-i-Farah Baksh*, 21a.

54 There are two versions of the story of succession. One is that Ali Muhammad nominated Hafiz Rahmat Khan as his successor, but the latter declared that he would regard his master's minor son Saadullah Khan as his 'chief and nawab'. (*Gulistan-i-Rahmat*, 34a. *'Imād*, 44. *Yadgār-i-Bahadurī*, 848.) The other is that Ali Muhammad declared Saadullah as his successor because his two elder sons, Abdullah and Faizullah, had been taken away by the Abdali, and Hafiz Rahmat was nominated as Saadullah's deputy. (*Tarikh-i-Farah Baksh*, 23b-24a).

which was now impotent to curb it. Ali Muhammad had built up by his strength and ability the Ruhela state.

SAFDAR JANG AND RUHELKHAND

The story of the next quarter century is one of hostility, though intermittent, of the nawabs of Avadh who sought every means to destroy the two Pathan states. Immediately on the death of Ali Muhammad Khan, it is alleged, Safdar Jang induced the emperor, a mere tool of his ambition, to appoint Qutb-ud-din Khan, grandson of Azmatullah Khan, the former faujdar of Muradabad, as the governor of Katehar. It is mentioned by Ruhela chroniclers that Hafiz Rahmat warned the new governor that he would not be permitted to take possession of his new charge and asked him to desist from his proposed course. Qutb-ud-din did not heed the advice. On his crossing the Ganges into Ruhelkhand he was attacked by Dundi Khan and slain.⁵⁵

This event seems to have enraged the wazir Safdar Jang, the old enemy of the Ruhelas, who was now the wazir of the empire. According to *Siyār-ul-mutākhkharīn*, he had been 'taking this long while much umbrage at the establishment which those warlike people had made on the frontiers of his government of Oudh'.⁵⁶ He made Qaim Khan, the Bangash chief of Farrukhabad, 'the instrument of his vengeance' against the Ruhelas. An imperial farman was issued to him to execute the escheat of Ruhela property and possessions, consequent on the death of Ali Muhammad; as a reward for his services he would be allowed to retain the territories of Bareli and Muradabad under his control. It was a subtle device to bring about the destruction of one Pathan state by the other. Elliot, on the basis of *Gulistān-i-Rahmat* and Waliullah's *Tārikh-i-Farrukhābād*, states that Qaim Khan 'would gladly have declined the honour but dared not disobey the king's mandate'. Loyalty and cupidity both seem to have influenced him to make a move against the Ruhelas. His conduct was, of course, contrary both to his own real interest and to the considerations of gratitude and ties of kinship which had bound the two branches of the Pathans. Qaim Khan sent his agent Muazzam Khan to Aonla to notify his appointment to Hafiz Rahmat Khan and seek his permission to resume control of the government, adding at the same time, however, that 'if he refused, the aid of the king's troops must be called in'. This must have offended the latter who is reported to have replied that he would not acknowledge any

⁵⁵ *Gulistān-i-Rahmat*, 38a.

⁵⁶ *Siyār*, 874.

master other than the king, and that Qaim Khan should decline the office as it had originated from the wazir who had usurped all powers of the king. The behaviour of the agent was so overbearing that he had to be dismissed. On his return to Delhi, Muazzam is stated to have misrepresented the attitude of Hafiz Rahmat, which prompted the wazir to order Qaim Khan to attack Ruhelkhand without delay.⁵⁷

Apart from the greed and jealousy of Safdar Jang towards his western neighbours, it is apparent that the imperial court sought to take advantage of the death of Ali Muhammad and the minority of his sons to eliminate a potential danger. The house of Farrukhabad had heretofore given ample proof of its loyalty and had enjoyed favour and position in the empire. By virtue of its close relationship with the Ruhelas it could have been conceived as a useful instrument of royal will to restore Katehar to full submission and absolute control of the central authority.⁵⁸ But Qaim Khan's impetuosity prevented a peaceful accommodation and a resort to hostilities became necessary.

The Bangash nawab crossed the Ganges and approached Badaun in the neighbourhood of which were situated eight parganahs of his possessions. Hafiz Rahmat also moved from Aonla and the two hostile forces met in the vicinity of that town. A last attempt to stave off violent confrontation was made by Hafiz Rahmat who sent a Muslim divine, Shahji Mian (Sayyid Ahmad or Sayyid Husain) with two other persons of equal sanctity to turn Qaim Khan away from his purpose. The Ruhela chroniclers impute the blame for the failure of these negotiations to Mahmud Khan, brother of Muazzam, who is reported to have expressed his intention of 'subduing the Afghans'. Thereupon fighting ensued. A battle was fought at Dumri, two miles from Badaun; Qaim Khan was killed and his troops routed.⁵⁹ The body of the chief was sent with all honour to Farrukhabad, but the Bangash territories to the north of the Ganges were incorporated into the Ruhela territory. Thus ended the second attempt of Safdar Jang and the imperial court to assert their authority over Katehar. There is no evidence to show that Hafiz Rahmat or his colleagues had expressed any sign of revolt against the central government or were disloyal to the emperor. It was an illustration of the natural jealousy

57 *Gulistān-i-Rahmat*, 36b, 37ab. *Tārikh-i-Farrukhābād*, 60. *Tārikh-i-Muzaffari*, 289a. *Khazāna'-i-'Āmīdā*, 79. *Bayān-i-Waqia*, 73a. *Gul-i-Rahmat*, 37-42.

58 *Bayān*, 73a.

59 *Gulistān-i-Rahmat*, 39a-43a. *Tārikh-i-Farah Baksh*, 28ab. *'Imād*, 45. *Siyār*, 874.

of the neighbouring chiefs and the ambition of the Avadh ruler to strengthen his position.

SAFDAR JANG AND FARRUKHABAD

The same law of escheat to enforce which Qaim Khan had lost his life was now applied by Safdar Jang against the Bangash state of Farrukhabad. It is mentioned by Ruhela chroniclers that the death of the Bangash chief was very gratifying to the wazir who now wished to bring his territory under his control.⁶⁰ He persuaded the titular emperor Ahmad Shah to authorize the action, and as some chroniclers state, even to accompany him in the expedition against Farrukhabad.⁶¹ There is divergence in details, but in the main the facts are clear. The wazir impressed the widow of the late Muhammad Khan Bangash and mother of Qaim Khan with his sincerity and made her agree to the payment of a fine of 60 lakhs to secure an imperial farman in favour of one of her sons for the possession of the territory. When the stipulated amount was not forthcoming, the city was attacked and the old lady with her younger sons was arrested. Safdar Jang departed for Delhi leaving his deputy Nawal Rai to exploit the advantage and make the necessary collections. History and romance have mingled in the description of the release of Bibi Sahiba, the widow, from the custody of Nawal Rai by her loyal servant Shitab Rai. Meanwhile Ahmad Khan, a younger son of the old lady, who resided in Delhi finding himself insecure there had fled to Farrukhabad and organized the Bangash forces. Nawal Rai, chagrined at the escape of his captive, attacked the Pathans to recapture the old lady, presumably with the approval of the wazir who is reported to have moved out of Delhi to join him. He was met by Ahmad Khan, aided by Rustam Khan Afridi, at Khudaganj and was defeated and slain.⁶² A new vigorous chief now acquired control of Farrukhabad.

The news of the discomfiture and death of Nawal Rai, coupled with the loss of a rich prize which had now slipped from his hand owing to the emergence of Ahmad Khan, greatly enraged Safdar Jang, who moved a second time against Farrukhabad after securing the emperor's permission. The imperial artillery and the services of a few nobles of the court, chief among them being Ishaq Khan, were

⁶⁰ *Tārikh-i-Muzaffari*, 289. *'Imād*, 45. *Gulistān-i-Rahmat*, 39a-43a. *Tārikh-i-Farah Baksh*, 27a.

⁶¹ *Tārikh-i-Ahmad Shahī*, 24a. *Gulistān-i-Rahmat*, 53b. *Khazāna'-i-'Āmirā* (79), *Tārikh-i-Farrukhābād* (62) and *Siyār* (875) say that the emperor accompanied the wazir up to Koil (Aligarh).

⁶² *Siyār*, 875. *Khazāna'-i-'Āmīra*, 79. *Tārikh-i-Farah Baksh*, 27a, 29a. *Gulistān-i-Rahmat*, 53a, 57b. *Tārikh-i-Farrukhābād*, 65.

at his disposal. He had also engaged the support of Suraj Mal, the Jat chief of Bharatpur. The confederate army marched against the Bangash territories and encamped for a month at Mashara near Patiali.⁶³ Ahmad Khan, on his part, faced with the menace of the wazir's hostility, rallied his troops and sought aid from Hafiz Rahmat Khan, who is mentioned to have sent Dundi Khan to his support. Hafiz himself is reported to have encamped outside Bareli on the road to Farrukhabad to be readily available in case of need to the Bangash. The wazir marched towards Farrukhabad where he was opposed by Ahmad Khan. In the action on 13 September 1750, which was hotly contested, the wazir was wounded and taken away from the field by his elephant-driver. His army lost heart and fled in confusion.⁶⁴ Ahmad Khan was left victorious and came into possession of vast booty. The Ruhelas were amply rewarded and returned to their lands.

This unexpected victory elated Ahmad Khan who now planned to invade Avadh with two objects in view: one to recover his brothers who were then held in captivity in the fort of Allahabad, and the other to annihilate the power of Safdar Jang in his own dominions before he could muster strength to wreak vengeance for his defeat. He sought the co-operation of Hafiz Rahmat Khan, who sent his troops to occupy Shahabad and Khairabad, areas contiguous to Katchar. Ahmad Khan besieged the fort of Allahabad; his son Mahmud Khan marched on Lucknow and took control of the affairs there. The siege of Allahabad was a protracted one during which, it is stated, the captive Bangash princes were murdered. Ahmad Khan failed to get victory and soon heard of the wazir's renewed attempt to invade Farrukhabad, this time with the aid of the Marathas.⁶⁵

To retrieve his honour and avenge his losses, Safdar Jang now sought the aid of the Marathas, who were at the time expanding their activities in northern India. Malhar Rao Holkar and Jayappa Sindhia came to his help. The allied forces first captured Koil, the faujdar of which informed Ahmad Khan of the impending danger. The Bangash raised the siege of Allahabad and returned to Farrukhabad where he called back his son from Lucknow. Not long after he had to meet the allied forces outside his capital and was defeated, along with his ally Saadullah Khan, the young ruler of Katchar. The latter is said to have come, in his impetuosity, without the consent

⁶³ A village, 22 miles to the north-east of Etah (*Gazetteer of Etah*, 201).

⁶⁴ *Tārikh-i-Muzaffari*, 317a. *Gulistān-i-Rahmat*, 59a. *Tārikh-i-Farah Baksh*, 29a.

⁶⁵ *Khażāna-i-Āmira*, 83. *Gulistān-i-Rahmat*, 60a. *Tārikh-i-Farah Baksh*, 29b. *Tārikh-i-Farrukhabād*, 66. *Tārikh-i-Muzaffari*, 321a. *Siyār*, 881.

of Hafiz Rahmat Khan, who seems to have been fully conscious of the fate of the Bangash and wished to keep Ruhelkhand free from the menace of Maratha invasion.⁶⁶ This discretion was born of his short-sightedness and was misconstrued by his opponents as the outcome of his partiality for Safdar Jang. Hafiz apparently did not wish to embroil his people in a conflict with the Marathas, but he seems to have missed the fact that Safdar Jang could never be friendly to the Ruhelas and that the Marathas after their victory over Ahmad Khan would not hesitate to march into Ruhelkhand. It is, however, doubtful if even the whole-hearted support of Hafiz could have saved the Bangash from disaster, as he had to face very heavy odds.

The inevitable followed. Safdar Jang and Holkar crossed the Ganges and overran the Ruhela lands.⁶⁷ Hafiz Rahmat had no means to withstand the hostile forces and moved with his chiefs and their families to Kashipur at the foot of the mountains. Rains having set in, the Marathas recrossed the Ganges and the Ruhelas returned to Aonla. After the rains, however, the invasion was repeated with the recurring flight to the impenetrable and inhospitable tarai lands. They took their stand at Chilkhya, where for four months the opposing forces—the Marathas and the army of Safdar Jang—faced them. Sick-ness thinned the ranks of the allied forces and the troops were impo-tunate to return. Meanwhile, Poona was menaced by the impending attack by the Nizam. Malhar Rao Holkar was asked to repair to the Deccan. At the same time news was received of the invasion of Ahmad Shah Abdali which compelled Safdar Jang to return to Delhi. These circumstances helped to promote an early peace which is re-pored to have been favourable to the Ruhelas. They escaped without loss of territory on payment of money to the Marathas and Safdar Jang failed to deprive his enemies of their possessions. Ahmad Khan was restored to Farrukhabad and Hafiz Rahmat returned to Aonla.⁶⁸ This was the first intervention of the Marathas in the Ruhela-Avadh dispute and the beginning of a series which ultimately brought about the destruction of the Ruhela state.

This event was followed by some years of peace and prosperity for the Ruhelas and the Bangash in which Hafiz Rahmat Khan con-solidated his position and extended the bounds of the Ruhela state. These years were further marked by amicable relations between the Avadh rulers and the Ruhelas.

⁶⁶ *Tārikh-i-Farah Bakhsh*, 30a. *Gulistān-i-Rahmat*, 61b.

⁶⁷ *Tārikh-i-Ahmad Shāhi*, 28a-29a. *Gulistān-i-Rahmat*, 31b. *Khuzāma'-i-'Āmirā*, 83-84. *Siyār*, 882.

⁶⁸ *Tārikh-i-Ahmad Shāhi*, 31a. *Gulistān-i-Rahmat*, 65a-66b. *Tārikh-i-Farah Bakhsh*, 32-33.

AVADH, RUHELAS, MARATHAS AND ABDALI

This new situation seems to have resulted from two factors: the eclipse of Safdar Jang, and later of his son Shuja-ud-daulah, in the politics of Delhi which were dominated by Imad-ul-mulk who had gained control of the emperor and his government for a number of years, and the frequent invasions of Ahmad Shah Abdali who naturally looked upon the Pathan chiefs as his collaborators and allies. The Marathas were on their part, in the earlier years, involved rather too deeply in Delhi politics to be free to pursue any aggressive designs against Ruhelkhand, and later after the discomfiture of Panipat, were scarcely in a position to go on their conquering adventures to the north. The Avadh rulers were at times compelled to seek the support and friendship of Hafiz Rahmat, and certainly had not the leisure or the means to prosecute, unaided, their antagonism against the Ruhelas. There was, at the same time, the emergence of the Ruhela chief Najib Khan into Delhi politics, where he was soon able to carve a nook for himself. His sympathy for his kinsmen was natural and he depended upon them for support in the kaleidoscopic turns of fortune. There was also solidarity between the three branches of the Pathans, which made for their strength and freedom from external danger. All these circumstances account for the comparative peace which enabled the two states of Ruhelkhand and Farrukhabad to build their strength.

Soon after his return from the Katehar adventure, Safdar Jang had occasion to ask for aid from Hafiz Rahmat, who owing to the displeasure of the emperor at the assassination of Javid Khan, he was dismissed from the wazirship. Safdar Jang raised a revolt and engaged Hafiz Rahmat to help him. The latter marched with a large force to his support; but before he could cross the Jamuna the imperial emissaries had asked him to join the emperor. On his refusal on the ground that his word was pledged to Safdar Jang, order was issued asking him to return, which he obeyed.⁶⁹ It was at this time that Najib Khan, ignoring Hafiz Rahmat's advice, separated himself from the Ruhela army,⁷⁰ joined the emperor and soon, by virtue of his bravery and generalship, rose in imperial estimation. Safdar Jang repaired to Avadh as he lost hope of retrieving his position in Delhi, and there followed several years of political confusion, palace revolution and factious intrigues which brought the empire to the very

⁶⁹ *Gulstān-i-Rahmat*, 75a. 'Umar ud-din Ahmad Fakhri. *Tārīkh-i-Najīb-ud-daulah*, Th. Gul-i-Rahmat, 67-68.

⁷⁰ Najib Khan entered the service of Ali Muhammad as a trooper and was later promoted to be jamadar. For his career see *Tārīkh-i-Najīb-ud-daulah*, 5b-122b; *Ma'ādir ul-umāra*, III, 865-68; Beale, *Oriental Biographical Dictionary*, 1894 ed., 289-90.

verge of ruin. This situation yielded two results; firstly, easy expansion of the Marathas leading to their hold over Delhi and their progress up to the Indus, and secondly, the recurring incursions of the Abdali, who was able to secure a foothold in the Punjab, rally under his banner the Pathan and other Muslim chiefs, and seek to expel the Marathas from northern India.

Two invasions of the Abdali followed in quick succession. The first was confined generally to the Punjab and was the outcome of the disturbed politics of Lahore, while the second was concerned with the Marathas and resulted in the famous battle of Panipat. It was during the first of these invasions that the Abdali is reported to have made contact with Najib-ud-daulah and other Ruhela chiefs.⁷¹ It is mentioned that hearing of the Abdali's arrival in Delhi, Hafiz Rahmat sent his vakil who was well received. Hafiz was commanded to join Imad-ul-mulk who had been commissioned to exact tribute from Shuja-ud-daulah. It is stated by the Ruhela chroniclers that conflict was avoided by the efforts of Hafiz who brought about an accommodation for five lakhs.⁷² This expedition had been engineered by Imad-ul-mulk who had instigated it with the desire of revenge. But soon after he too suffered an eclipse and Najib-ud-daulah was left by the Abdali in control of Delhi. This was too much for Imad-ul-mulk, who called in the aid of the Marathas and compelled Najib to take refuge in his estate at Sukartal which had been strongly fortified by him. For some time Delhi suffered a veritable reign of terror. The emperor Alangir II was assassinated, his son Ali Gauhar (Shah Alam) had to leave the capital and seek shelter in the east, and the Marathas were well entrenched in the imperial capital.

Imad-ul-mulk and his ally Dattaji Sindhia pursued two measures which brought back the Abdali to the plains of Hindustan. The first was the expulsion of the Abdali's son, Timur Shah, from Lahore, and the over-running of the Punjab up to the Indus by the Marathas. The second was the vindictive action against Najib-ud-daulah in his own lands. Sindhia advanced with a large force to reduce Sukartal and crush for ever the might of Najib, as he was then considered to be the main enemy, not only of the vain ambitions of Imad-ul-mulk, but also of the expansion of the Marathas in the north and the consolidation of their hold over the imperial capital. The Maratha forces crossed the Ganges and were close to Sukartal. Najib called in the support of his kinsmen of Ruhelkhand. Hafiz Rahmat Khan

⁷¹ *Gulistān-i-Rahmat*, 79b. According to *Tārikh-i-Najīb-ud-daulah* (14b), it was Najib who initiated correspondence with the Abdali.

⁷² *Gulistān-i-Rahmat*, 79b 81b. *Tārikh-i-Najīb-ud-daulah*, 16a. *Gul-i-Rahmat*, 68 70.

was unable to meet the allied forces alone and asked for help from Shuja-ud-daulah, who was prepared to render assistance in his own interest.⁷³ The success of the Marathas against Najib and the discomfiture of the Ruhelas would have adversely reacted on the fortunes of Avadh, for that territory was plainly destined to be the subsequent target of Maratha arms. Shuja-ud-daulah deployed his forces on the Ganges and defeated Govind Pant Bundele in one action. But such limited action was inadequate to quell the Marathas and compel them to relinquish their grip of Najib's stronghold. At that time, however, the Abdali, apparently on the invitation of the Ruhela chief, invaded Hindustan again and thus forced the Marathas and Imad-ul-mulk to divert their energies away from Najib to the protection of Delhi.

The Abdali had good reason once again to direct his hordes against northern India, for the Maratha expansion had menaced his possession of the Punjab. His invasion was directed solely against them and for this purpose he rallied under his banner all the Pathan chiefs and even Shuja-ud-daulah. The war was given a religious colour; it was a jihad against the infidels. Najib-ud-daulah, Hafiz Rahmat Khan, Dundi Khan and Ahmad Khan Bangash joined their forces with those of the foreigner and made the ruler of Avadh also, though reluctantly, side with this group. The Ruhela chronicles have assigned an important role to Hafiz Rahmat Khan, who was sent against Suraj Mal Jat and who is represented to have been treated with great consideration by Ahmad Shah. The opposing forces met at Panipat; from all accounts it is clear the Ruhelas played an active and prominent part in the battle. After the victory, the Abdali gave to Inavet Khan, Hafiz Rahmat's son, the districts of Etawa and Shikohabad, which had been wrested from the Marathas.⁷⁴ This period recorded the high watermark of Ruhela power and the prestige of Hafiz Rahmat Khan.

RUHELAS, MARATHAS AND ENGLISH

The next fourteen years of Ruhela history may be divided into two periods, one prior to the resumption of Maratha incursions into northern India and the other, the years of their continued involve-

⁷³ According to *Tārīkh-i-Najib ud daulah* (26), while Shuja reached Ruhelkhand to help Najib, Hafiz Rahmat and the Ruhela chiefs did not cross the borders of their territory. But *Gul-i-Rahmat* (72-74) says that Hafiz mir fled to Sukartal and his troops joined Shuja's troops on the way.

⁷⁴ *Gulstān-i-Rahmat*, 105. *Tārīkh-i-Faīl Baksh* (52b-53a) generalizes that jagirs were assigned to the Ruhelas in Koi, Jalesar, Firuzabad, Khurja, Shukohabad, Shikarpur, Etawa, etc.

ment in the politics of Delhi and its neighbourhood. In the first period, the Ruhelas saw comparative peace and built up their position as one of the important powers which had to be reckoned with, while in the later years were laid the foundations of their ultimate destruction. The return of the Abdali to Afghanistan after Panipat left Delhi in the hands of Najib-ud-daulah, and the plains of the Ganges on either side, apart from Avadh, under the control of the other two branches of the Pathans, the Ruhelas and the Bangash nawabs. Najib-ud-daulah established his estate in Saharanpur, built the fort of Najafgarh and founded Najibabad. His possessions extended on the northern side of the Ganges and ran alongside of Ruhelkhand. The Ruhelas had Etawa and Shikohabad in the Doab as a gift from the Abdali which they consolidated. Ahmad Khan Bangash ruled over Farrukhabad and a large part of the Doab. This commanding position, together with the strategic situation of their territories, made them dangerous, on the one hand, to the nawab of Avadh and, on the other, made their disintegration or alliance essential for the Marathas in their schemes of northern expansion. Their situation made them the victims alternately of Maratha and Avadh cupidity. Their prospect of existence depended on their unity and strength, but these were lacking. Shuja-ud-daulah had inherited the ambition to consolidate his territory by annihilating his Pathan neighbours and he was merely biding his time for a favourable opportunity. The Marathas desired to seize control of Hindustan either by securing the wilful submission of Nabh and his compatriots or by suppressing them. The Ruhelas could have played off one against the other but the game was risky, and also they did not play their cards well. These factors, allied with the exigencies of the British diplomatic situation, contrived the end of Hafiz Rahmat Khan and the ruin of the Ruhelas.

There is mention of Ruhela participation in Mir Qasim's struggle against the English. It is recorded that Shuja-ud-daulah and the emperor asked for help from Hafiz Rahmat Khan, who sent his son Inavet Khan with some troops to fight the English.⁷⁵ They seem to have taken part in the battle of Karmanasa and the siege of Patna up to the fall-back of the allied forces to Buxar, when before the rout of Shuja-ud-daulah, Inavet Khan seems to have returned to his home. Later, after his discomfiture, Shuja is reported to have sent his family to Bareli,⁷⁶ and to have sought the help of Hafiz Rahmat and Ahmad Khan in a grand effort against the English. But the

75 *Gulistan-i-Rahmat*, 126b. *Turikh-i-Farah Bakhsh*, 72a. *Turikh-i-Muzaffari*, II. 162b-163b.

76 *Gulistan-i-Rahmat*, 129b. *Lubb-ul-tawarikh*, 182.

two were not prepared to measure arms with the Company's forces and advised Shuja to patch up with his victors.⁷⁷ Then followed the treaty of Allahabad. There is no indication of the Ruhelas having interested themselves in the political developments and intrigues at the imperial capital or elsewhere in northern India, except for the help which was rendered to Najib-ud-daulah in his fight against the Jats and the Sikhs. These years till 1768 were years of peace in which Hafiz Rahmat seems to have devoted himself to his family affairs and the needs of his subjects.

By 1767 the Marathas had recovered sufficiently from the shock of Panipat to be able to redirect their gaze on Hindustan. Their recurring invasions under the leadership of Mahadji Sindhhia, Tukoji Holkar and Ramchandra Ganesh, in accordance with the imperial policy of the energetic young Peshwa, Madhav Rao I, revived the chances of their dominating Delhi once again and ruling the whole of northern India. They were soon able to overrun Rajputana and subdue the Jats to their will. They turned their attention then to Delhi where Najib was not loath to seek their alliance. For a time it seemed as if the Marathas would succeed in combining all the states of northern India to form a strong confederacy and endanger the security of the English in Bengal. That occasioned almost desperate efforts on the part of the English authorities at Calcutta to keep Shuja and the Ruhelas away from the alliance by magnifying to them the risks of the Maratha supremacy.⁷⁸

Prior to his death—so the chronicles tell us—Najib-ud-daulah sought to gain possession of Farrukhabad with the aid of the Marathas Ahmad Khan, who was blind then, asked for help from Hafiz Rahmat. The latter went to his support, but before the combined forces had moved far into Bangash territory, Najib got ill and soon died.⁷⁹ Zabita Khan, his son, was in the Maratha camp. Zabita is reported to have written to Hafiz that he was almost a captive of the Marathas and was staying in their camp against his will. He asked for Hafiz's help in securing his release.⁸⁰ Negotiations were opened. The Marathas demanded Etawa and Shikohabad as the price

⁷⁷ *Gulistan-i Rahmat*, 134b-135a. According to *Tarikh-i-Farah Balkh* (73b-74a) Hafiz Rahmat readily agreed to support Shuja and Ahmad Khan against the English. But according to *Tarikh-i-Murazzani* (lt. 173b) Hafiz Rahmat and Dundi Khan asked Shuja to persuade Ahmad Khan in favour of fighting.

⁷⁸ The English contemplated a confederacy consisting of themselves, the nawabs of Avadh, the Ruhelas and the Jats to check the Maratha menace. (Bengal Select Committee Proceedings, 10 February-31 December 1786, pp. 41-42.)

⁷⁹ *Tarikh-i-Najib-ud-daulah*, 121b-122a, 123b. *Gulistan-i-Rahmat*, 147ab, 148a. *Daur Namā*, 50.

⁸⁰ *Gulistan-i-Rahmat*, 149b-150a.

and promised not to molest the Pathans any further. Before the terms could be settled, Zabita had slipped away from the camp. The Pathan forces were defeated and the Marathas came into possession of their two districts in the Doab, which Hafiz gave up.

However, it was not till 1771 that real danger threatened them. Shah Alam was chafing under his gilded captivity at Allahabad and was eager to return to Delhi to resume his sceptre. The English were not prepared to let such a rich hostage slip out of their hands, while, at the same time, they were not ready to enlarge the area of their activity. Finding no support from his captors, Shah Alam countenanced and grasped with avidity the offer of help made by Mahadji Sindhia and moved out of Allahabad on his march to Delhi. It seems Ahmad Khan Bangash had also been instrumental in whetting his resolve.⁸¹ Shah Alam proceeded to Farrukhabad, but prior to his arrival there, Ahmad Khan had died and been succeeded by Muzaffar Jang. Such a golden opportunity could not be allowed to pass by; the emperor exacted a large sum of money for his recognition.⁸² Ultimately at the head of the Maratha forces and with their assistance he entered Delhi. Meanwhile, Zabita Khan had been fired by the ambition to recover the position formerly occupied by his father. He seems to have been hostile to the emperor's return, and even 'prepared to enforce his claim by the sword'.⁸³ The efforts of Hafiz to dissuade him were of no avail. This prompted retaliation on the part of Shah Alam and his allies, the Marathas.⁸⁴ Mirza Najaf Khan, the imperial commander, marched with the Marathas against Sukartal where Zabita Khan had entrenched himself. Leaving a small force there, the Marathas crossed the Ganges, laid waste his territories, and captured his family at Najafgarh.⁸⁵

The Maratha incursion into the trans-Ganges regions alarmed the Ruhelas as they naturally concluded that their lands would be the next prey of Maratha rapacity. They sent their families, as before, to the foot of the hills. At the same time attempts were made by Zabita Khan and other Ruhela chiefs to seek the assistance of Shuja-ud-daulah and it is even mentioned that Zabita sent a blank treaty to Shuja for his help.⁸⁶ The Marathas had ravaged the Ruhela lands and their hordes were one after the other crossing the Ganges.

SHUJA-UD-DAULAH'S AGGRESSIVE POLICY

The attitude of Shuja-ud-daulah at this time was very hostile to the Ruhelas. He had been entertaining the ambition of taking posses-

⁸¹ *Gul-i-Rahmat*, 121.

⁸² *Gulistan-i-Rahmat*, 157b.

⁸³ Ibid., 158b-159a.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 159b.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 161a.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 162a, Bengal Select Committee Proceedings, 21 January 1772, p. 42.

sion of their territory by annihilating them. In British official documents there are references to his 'most implacable hatred towards the Rohillas', and his ardent wish 'for an opportunity to reduce the power of the Rohilla chiefs'.⁸⁷ He was keen to exploit the occasion of Maratha invasion to his advantage. On 9 March 1772 Sir Robert Barker wrote that Shuja was anxious to take 'advantage of the dismayed Rohillas, and seizing the country of Hafiz Rahmat'.⁸⁸ This he could effect by two means, either by negotiations with the Marathas or by forceful possession on their return. He could, according to Barker, 'scarcely withstand the bait they (Marathas) hold out to him', and was actually negotiating with the Marathas on that basis.⁸⁹ Barker dissuaded him from both the courses at the time, and convinced him of the danger involved in his territorial ambition at the cost of the Ruhelas. Shuja was also conscious of the menace to his own territories in case either the Ruhelas were annihilated or they made terms with the Marathas.⁹⁰ It was definite that failing to get support from any quarter, the Ruhelas would have made an accommodation with the Marathas on the basis of allowing them passage through their territories to invade Avadh. With some loss of territory on that condition, the Ruhelas could then have saved the remainder of their lands. This contingency was contrary to the interests of the English and Sir Robert Barker persuaded Shuja to be active against the Marathas and enter into an agreement with the Ruhela chiefs for their support.⁹¹

The Ruhelas on their part were conscious of the danger from Shuja, but in face of the greater evil, the Maratha invasion, were prepared to seek his help for which they had made overtures.⁹² But at the same time, till they had been assured of such support, they were not averse to playing the game of negotiations with the Marathas, in whom they had little faith. If Shuja refused to respond to their request, it may be surmised that they would have struck some bargain with the Marathas for their own security, howsoever temporary, even at the cost of Avadh. Hafiz Rahmat's negotiations with the Marathas were dilatory. He had, nevertheless, faith in the English, and when Barker came to him seeking his presence at Shahabad for negotiations

⁸⁷ Bengal Select Committee Proceedings, 14 January 1770, p. 727; 13 September 1771, pp. 210-211.

⁸⁸ Forrest, *Selections from the State Papers of Governors General of India*, Warren Hastings, 309.

⁸⁹ J. N. Sarkar, *Persian Records of Maratha History*, 25.

⁹⁰ CPC, IV, p. 43.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 52.

⁹² *Gulliqan-i-Rahmat*, 162b.

with Shuja, the Ruhela leader went there with alacrity. After some delay a treaty was concluded on 17 June 1772, by which the ruler of Avadh and the Ruhela chiefs entered into an agreement of mutual friendship and support.⁹³ The most important clause was the second one which stipulated for the establishment of the 'Rohilla Sirdars in their different possessions' by Shuja-ud-daulah by 'obliging the Marathas to retire either by peace or war; this to depend on the pleasure of the Vizier'. It was also agreed that in case the Marathas retired on account of rains but returned again, their expulsion would be the 'business of the Vizier'. In lieu of this support, the Ruhelas promised to pay him 40 lakhs of rupees by instalments extending over three years, the first ten being due when the Ruhelas were settled in their lands on the expiry of the emergency. To this agreement Sir Robert Barker was a witness.⁹⁴

Shuja had of course made a show of his force and had remained encamped in Shahabad for a long time. The Marathas had knowledge of the treaty, and even before that they had commenced re-crossing the Ganges owing to the imminence of the rainy season. This respite enabled the Ruhelas to return to their lands. Before the recurrence of a further Maratha invasion two events of great significance had happened; one was the rebellion of Inavat Khan⁹⁵ and an almost open exhibition of the growing division in the Ruhela ranks, and the other was the defection of Zabita Khan with a view to joining the Marathas to regain his father's position in Delhi.⁹⁶ It is reported that the Marathas used Zabita Khan to win over Hafiz and other Ruhela chiefs to their side to agree to their invading Avadh through Ruhelkhand.⁹⁷ At the same time the Marathas had made rather severe demands on Shuja-ud-daulah for the cession of Kora and Allahabad which the emperor had assigned to them as also for payment of money.⁹⁸ These

⁹³ *Tārikh-i-Muzaffarī*, II, 197b. According to *Gulstān-i-Rahmat* (162a-164b) and *Gul-i-Rahmat* (128-129) Hafiz Rahmat entered into the treaty at the persistent request of Zabita Khan and other Ruhela chiefs. But the story given in *Tārikh-i-Farah Bakhsh* (82ab) is different. There it is said that Hafiz Rahmat, fed up with the damp climate of the hills, visited Shahabad on the call of Shuja-ud-daulah and, failing to realize the consequences, entered into a treaty with him without consulting the other Ruhela chiefs.

⁹⁴ *Gulstān-i-Rahmat* 103b-104a. *Tārikh-i-Farah Bakhsh*, 82b. *Gul-i-Rahmat*, 128-129.

⁹⁵ *Gul-i-Rahmat*, 131-141. *Tārikh-i-Farah Bakhsh*, 87a-89b. *Gulstān-i Rahmat*, 168-179b.

⁹⁶ *Daur Nāma*, 56. *Tārikh-i-Farah Bakhsh*, 90b.

⁹⁷ CPC, IV, p. 43. *Gul-i-Rahmat* (141) does not mention Zabita Khan and refers simply to Maratha embassy to Hafiz Rahmat.

⁹⁸ CPC, IV, p. 43.

developments must have alarmed Shuja who would not have been averse to offering every possible concession to the Ruhelas to prevent them from subscribing to the overtures of the Marathas. The English sources do not corroborate the statement made by the Ruhela chronicles that the nawab of Avadh sent emissaries to Hafiz Rahmat Khan and promised to return the bond of the previous season for payment of 40 lakhs, in case Hafiz remained steadfast to that alliance and did not join the Marathas.⁹⁹ The circumstantial evidence is in support of this positive statement, for Shuja and his allies—the English—were in a serious predicament and would have resorted to any course to prevent an invasion of Avadh through Ruhelkhand and with the active connivance of the Ruhelas. Hafiz Rahmat had little faith in the Marathas; this must have influenced his decision to resist their temptations.

Early in 1773 the Marathas approached the Ganges to cross into Ruhelkhand and encamped at Rainghat. As Zabita Khan was their ally, his territories escaped their ravages. Shuja had meanwhile impressed upon his English allies the danger which they both faced and had secured active military support from them.¹⁰⁰ These forces advanced to Ramghat and the Ruhelas also prepared to support them. For some time General Barker deployed his forces in the neighbourhood of Ramghat, and at one stage Sindhia's forces were attacked by the English forces across the Ganges. But before a decisive engagement could be fought, the Marathas in April 1773 had been compelled to break their camp and repair in all haste to Poona owing to the murder of the peshwa Narayan Rao and the impending civil war in Maharashtra. This was a heaven-sent succour to the Ruhelas.

Prior to this event Shuja had in most explicit terms indicated to Sir Robert Barker his desire to unite Ruhelkhand to his dominion by expelling the Ruhelas.¹⁰¹ This was to be executed with the assistance of the English for which he was prepared to pay the Company 50 lakhs together with exemption from payment of tribute to the emperor under the treaty of Allahabad.¹⁰² Barker wrote to Warren Hastings and seems to have commended such a course. When the Marathas had retired, Shuja asked for the fulfilment of the terms of the agreement to pay 40 lakhs, but this was done only when all traces of the Marathas had disappeared from the neighbourhood lest Hafiz Rahmat should join them. There is a difference of opinion in regard to Hafiz Rahmat's reply; it is uncertain whether he pleaded his inability to

⁹⁹ *Gulistan-i-Rahmat*, 184b-185b. *Gul-i-Rahmat*, 142.

¹⁰⁰ *Gulistan-i-Rahmat*, 189a. CPC, IV, p. 49.

¹⁰¹ Bengal Select Committee Proceedings, 1772, p. 48.

¹⁰² CPC, IV, pp. 49, 94.

pay owing to the non-fulfilment on their part of the contract by the Ruhela chiefs or on the ground of Shuja's promise to return the bond.¹⁰³ It is however certain that the payment was not made. There was another reason too for Shuja's enrageinent, and it was the refusal of Hafiz Rahmat to let him recover Etawa and Shikohabad from the Marathas.¹⁰⁴ His declared intention of possessing Ruhelkhand, for which the occasion was most propitious owing to the remote prospect of fresh Maratha incursion and the division among the Ruhelas, was now intensified by the inability of Hafiz Rahmat to meet his wishes and by the too-ready willingness of the English to cater to his fancy in the interest of strengthening Avadh as a buffer-state. He approached Warren Hastings who promised him active support in the conference at Banaras.¹⁰⁵

Early in 1774, after he had made sure of the defection of a number of Ruhela chiefs, Shuja-ud-daulah invaded Ruhelkhand. Hafiz Rahmat Khan decided to fight even against all odds. In the battle of Katra, Hafiz was killed and his forces were routed. Shuja overran Katchar with the aid of the English troops and occupied it.¹⁰⁶ The Ruhelas fought most bravely but they were no match for the superior forces of the enemy. Thus the state of Ruhelkhand came to a premature end.

¹⁰³ Apart from *Tārikh-i-Farah Baksh* which is silent on the point, other chronicles are unanimous about the assurance given on Shuja's behalf by his envoy, Shah Madan, that the bond for 40 lakhs would be returned when the Marathas were driven out. (*Gul-i-Rahmat*, 142. *Gulistān-i-Rahmat*, 183a-185a. *Akhbār-i-Hasan*, 69. *Imād*, 115.)

* In his letter to Warren Hastings (CPC, IV, pp. 88-89) Hafiz alleged Shuja's indifference to the defence of the Ruhela country in violation of the treaty of Shahabad, but made no mention of Shah Madan or Shuja's assurance about the return of the bond.

¹⁰⁴ CPC, IV, pp. 117, 128. *Gulistān-i-Rahmat*, 199b. *Gul-i-Rahmat*, 151.

¹⁰⁵ CPC, IV, p. 94.

¹⁰⁶ *Siyār*, 936. CPC, IV, pp. 181, 186, 188, 193, 194. *Imād*, 115.

CHAPTER SIX

BENGAL SUBAH

(1707-1756)

RISE OF MURSHID QULI KHAN

WITH THE DECLINE of imperial authority at Delhi after the death of Aurangzib, Bengal became an independent viceroyalty, for all practical purposes, under Murshid Quli Jafar Khan (surnamed Jafar Khan Nasiri, Nasir Jang, Mutaman-ul-mulk), though he continued to profess theoretical allegiance to the Mughal emperor and to remit to him tribute as well as presents. Mirza Muhammad Hadi,¹ as he was previously called, had won Aurangzib's confidence by honest and efficient discharge of the duties of some offices of trust and responsibility in the Deccan, and had received the title of Kartalab Khan. In recognition of his brilliant and faithful services as diwan of Hyderabad the emperor elevated him to the more responsible position of diwan of Bengal (17 November 1700) while prince Azim-us-shan continued to be the nazim of Bengal,² Bihar being added to his charge in 1703. In 1701 Kartalab Khan was appointed, in addition, saujdar of Midnapur and Burdwan in Bengal and diwan of Orissa.³ The Council in Calcutta wrote to the Court of Directors on 8 January 1702: "The prince (Azim-us-shan) remains in Bengal but we hope his oppressions may in some measure cease, now there is a new Duan arrived at Burdwan who hath the character of being very severe

1 A Brahmin by birth, he was sold to Haji Shafi Isfahani, who made him a Muslim and took him to Persia where he "grafted the refinement, orderliness and wisdom of the Persian race on the intelligence and industry of his Brahman stock". (J. N. Sarkar, *History of Bengal*, Dacca University, II, 399-400).

2 He became subahdar of Bengal in November 1697.

3 We read in the Persian *Akhbarat* that he was appointed diwan of Azim-us-shan's estates on 10 October 1701, and his rank was raised to 900 zat and 900 sawar.

and a great promoter of the King's interests.⁴ In December 1702 Kartalab Khan was honoured with the title of Murshid Quli Khan. In 1703 he became deputy subahdar of Orissa in addition to his Bengal posts. In 1704 he was given the diwani of Bihar also, but he carried on this work through a deputy.

Murshid Quli Khan justified the confidence reposed in him. "The prudent management of the new Diwan soon raised Bengal to the highest degree of prosperity. Particularly careful in the choice of his officers, he through their means obtained such complete information of the actual capacity of the lands and of the amount of custom duties that he was soon able to transmit to the Emperor an exact statement thereof... With the Emperor's approval he resumed all the jagirs in Bengal, excepting what were properly annexed to the Nizamat and the Diwani; and in lieu thereof gave assignments upon Orissa, the cultivation of which province had of late been very much neglected. The Diwan took the collection into his own hands, and by preventing the embezzlements of the zamindars and jagirdars augmented the annual revenues."⁵

Jealous of Murshid Quli Khan's growing influence in revenue matters at the cost of his own authority, Azim-us-shan foolishly instigated some troopers to murder him. The diwan, with his usual tact and courage, suppressed the conspiracy. But as a precautionary measure against future attempts on his life he shifted the revenue office from Dacca, the seat of the viceregal government, to a more centrally situated place, called Maqsudabad, on the bank of the Bhagirathi. The name of the city was later changed with the emperor's permission to Murshidabad after Murshid Quli's name. Furious at this unworthy conduct on the part of the prince-viceroy, the emperor asked him to leave Bengal for Bihar. So Azim-us-shan removed himself to Patna (1703-1704), his son Farrukh-siyar being left as his deputy in Bengal. He remained at Patna for about three years (1704-1706) and, with the emperor's permission, renamed the city Azimabad.

Murshid Quli Khan made satisfactory arrangements for the direct collection of revenue from the ryots through his own agents, called ijara-dars or contractors, replacing the old zamindars or landed proprietors from whom regular payment could not be expected. Fully realising that he was a strong and vigorous administrator, the rājas on the frontiers of Bengal became regular in transmitting to him their respective shares of tribute and presents. Severe punishments

⁴ Wilson, *Old Fort William in Bengal*, I, 49.

⁵ Gladwin, *A Narrative of the Transactions in Bengal*, 19. *Riyāz* (Eng. trans.), 249.

were inflicted on the defaulting zamindars to enforce the payment of the state dues. Military expenditure was considerably curtailed. Conscious of his own strength, Murshid Quli Khan did not maintain a large standing army or a provincial militia. Two thousand cavalry and four thousand infantry were considered to be sufficient for all his purposes. His orders were "so absolute that the most refractory trembled in his presence and his commands were so implicitly obeyed, that it was sufficient to send a foot soldier to sequester a zamindar or punish an offender at the greatest distance. He did not allow the inferior zamindars even public audience, neither did he permit the Rajas or any of his own officers to be seated in his presence. Two days in the week he administered justice in season, and was so impartial in his decisions, and rigid in the execution thereof, that no one dared to commit oppression... He did not repose absolute confidence in his *mutasaddis* (accountants) but required a daily account of the receipts, expenditures and balances which he examined and then signed with his own hand."

All this enabled Murshid Quli Khan to remit to the emperor crores of rupees as surplus revenue of Bengal during the latter's years of anxiety and embarrassment towards the close of his career when the imperial exchequer had been heavily depleted on account of the 'endless war' in the Deccan. In return he was rewarded with promotions in rank and office. In 1707 he was made naib nazim⁶ or deputy governor as well as diwan or revenue chief of Bengal and subahdar of Orissa. In 1708 he was transferred from Bengal and appointed diwan of the Deccan. Absent from Bengal throughout 1708 and 1709, he returned to this province as diwan in 1710. In 1711 he was appointed faujdar of Midnapur as also of the Hugli port. In 1713 he was made deputy subahdar of Bengal. Next year he received, in addition, the subahdari of Orissa. Throughout Bahadur Shah's reign Murshid Quli was the virtual ruler of the Bengal subah as its *de jure* nazim, while prince Azim-us-shan had to attend the imperial court. A few months before his accession to the Delhi throne Farrukh-siyar, then a rival of Jahandar Shah, made an attempt to replace Murshid Quli Khan by Rashid Khan; probably on account of the diwan's refusal to comply with his demand for men and money. But it proved futile; Murshid Quli repulsed the troops sent against him and slew their commander Rashid Khan⁷ (May 1712). After securing the throne Farrukh-siyar became reconciled to Murshid Quli Khan, who loyally sent the provincial

⁶ Wilson, *Early Annals*, I, 290.

⁷ *Ibid.*, II, Part I, 50, 80. Letter to Court, 10 December 1712, paras 59-67. Gladwin, 57.

tribute to him. The emperor appointed him the deputy subahdar of Bengal in 1713, in addition to his previous post of diwan. The subahdari of Orissa was conferred on him in 1714. At last Murshid Quli became full subahdar of Bengal in September 1717. Through his recommendation, Fateh Chand, nephew of Manik Chand, received the title of Jagat Seth from Farrukh-siyar and was appointed by him banker to the Bengal government treasury.

MURSHID QULI KHAN AS ADMINISTRATOR

As a successful administrator, Murshid Quli kept Bengal very much immune⁸ from the unwholesome influence of those disruptive forces which had been triumphant in certain other parts of India as a natural sequel to the suicidal wars among the feeble successors of Aurangzib. The Council in Calcutta wrote to the Court of Directors on 22 January 1719: "Affairs of the Empire still unsettled, cannot depend on the various reports, the subah (Murshid Quli) will not part with any part of the immense treasure of the Kings which he has, he keeps things so quiet that business goes current; but all the roads above so stopt that Woollen goods, Mettals etc. will not sell."⁹ They wrote in another letter dated 16 August 1726: "Bengal is quiet and Jaffar Cawn is easy with them, great troubles at Court, trade to Surat etc. very dull."

While continuing to profess allegiance to the emperor, Murshid Quli Khan governed Bengal as a virtual dictator, appointing and dismissing officers as he liked.¹⁰ The vigour and efficiency of his government and his impartiality in dispensing justice maintained peace and order in Bengal and brought prosperity to her people. Though his treatment of the defaulting zamindars was sometimes unduly harsh, some of his measures proved highly beneficial to the ryots. Exemplary punishments were inflicted on the robbers and other culprits and suitable steps were taken to check their nefarious activities. "In every place where a robbery was committed Jafar Khan obliged the faujdar and zamindar to find out the thief and to recover the stolen goods. The goods, or their equivalent, were given to the person who had been robbed; and the thief was impaled alive. By these means, during his government, travellers were protected on the roads; and every man's house was secured."¹¹

⁸ Letter to Court, 29 November 1719, para 49.

⁹ *Ibid.*, para 25.

¹⁰ The emperor appointed Zia-ud-din Khan faujdar of Hughlt in 1710. (*Wilson, Early Annals*, I, 329, 332, 341). But Murshid Quli got him dismissed in 1711-12 (*Ibid.*, II, 28) and filled the vacancy by appointing Wali Beg Khan on his own authority (Letters to Court, 7 January 1711, para 49; 10 December 1712, para 66; 8 February 1713, para 27).

¹¹ Gladwin, 62.

In 1722 Murshid Quli carefully revised Shah Shuja's revenue settlement of 1658. The parganahs were distributed into 13 chaklas in place of 34 sarkars of Shah Shuja's settlement,¹² although the sarkar divisions continued to be mentioned in the khalsa records to adjust the annual accounts transmitted to Delhi.¹³ Each chakla, being an important administrative unit, was under the control of an amil who was responsible for the due collection of revenue within his jurisdiction. Land revenue from the khalsa or revenue-paying lands had increased to Rs 11,72,279, or 13½ per cent, during the period of 64 years from 1658. By reducing the extent of jagir lands Murshid Quli transferred Rs 10,21,415 from them to the khalsa. His complete revenue roll stood as follows:¹⁴

Khalsa lands according to Shuja's settlement	—	87,67,015
Increase on above in 64 years	—	11,72,279
Resumed from jagir lands	—	10,21,415
Jagir	—	33,27,477
		Rs 1,42,88,186

This meant an increase of about 9 per cent over the total revenue of 1658 and the government exchequer in Bengal remained consequently well filled.

Two features of Murshid Quli's revenue system—open imposition of abwab or additional imposts and introduction of revenue farming on a large scale—have been considered to be objectionable. The former, it has been pointed out, established 'a dangerous precedent' for the future.¹⁵ But so long as he lived Murshid Quli was quite mindful of the welfare and prosperity of his province. He regulated prices of articles so carefully that these could be purchased cheap, and he not only forbade hoarding of grains but also duly controlled their export.

MURSHID QULI AND EUROPEAN TRADERS

Fully alive to the importance of external commerce for Bengal, Murshid Quli gave encouragement to foreign merchants, especially the Moghuls and Arabs, from whom he only exacted the prescribed duties of 2½ per cent, and did not permit the customs-house officers

12 Ascoli, *Early Revenue History of Bengal*, 25.

13 Grant's *Analysis of the Finances of Bengal* (Firminger, Fifth Report, II, 174-176).

14 Firminger, *Fifth Report*, II, 120.

15 J. C. Simha, *Economic Annals of Bengal*, 3-4.

to take more than their regulated fees'.¹⁶ He sought to put all the traders in his province on an equal footing. He permitted the Ostend Company to build a factory at Bankybazar on the eastern bank of the Hugli river. But his general policy in relation to all the European trading companies was strict as he was particular about enforcing governmental authority over them so that they might not establish undue influence. A contemporary English letter describes him as 'Lord of Lords'.¹⁷ In 1718 he asked the English not to strengthen their fortifications in Calcutta.¹⁸

So far as the English were concerned they enjoyed exemption from trade duties by paying in lieu of these a paltry sum of Rs 3,000 a year on the strength of Shah Shuja's nishan of 1656. Murshid Quli was opposed to this and wanted to make them pay customs like the other merchants. The English thought it necessary to satisfy him by costly presents at frequent intervals.¹⁹ But they also sought to evade compliance with his orders as far as possible²⁰ and even increased their military establishments considering these to be 'the most convincing argument to support their privileges'.²¹ They further tried various means to please prince Azim-us-shan²² and the imperial court.²³ They took an important step to secure from the emperor Farrukh-siyar confirmation of what they considered to be their privileges by sending to him an embassy under John Surman. They intended to have the farman 'so worded' as to make them free from any obligation to apply to the Bengal nawab for sanads.²⁴

Certain favourable circumstances enabled the embassy to obtain from the emperor (1716-17) the desired farman granting to the English East India Company some significant privileges. The Company as a corporate body was exempted from the payment of customs on their exports and imports in lieu of an annual sum of Rs 3,000 only. Murshid Quli did not object to this. In fact, in spite of occasional interruptions²⁵ the trade of the English East India Company in Bengal prospered gradually. Murshid Quli's subsequent attitude towards

¹⁶ Stewart, *History of Bengal*, 447.

¹⁷ Letter to Court, 17 February 1714, para 17.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 8 December 1718, para 74.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 7 January 1711, paras 45-49; 13 September 1718, para 33; 8 December 1718, para 73. Wilson, *Early Annals*, I, 301.

²⁰ Letter to Court, 13 February 1713, paras 108, 109; 17 February 1714, para 17.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 8 December 1718, para 84.

²² Wilson, *Early Annals*, II, Part I, 22.

²³ *Ibid.*, 65. Letter to Court, 16 February 1711, para 4.

²⁴ Letter to Court, 13 September 1718, para 39.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 31 January 1722, para 78; 28 January 1727, paras 78, 80; 19 February 1727, paras 14-15.

them was referred to by the Council in Calcutta as 'easy'²⁶ and he was described as their 'friend'.²⁷

But determined to maintain to the fullest extent his authority as the subahdar of the province, Murshid Quli did not permit the English to enjoy the advantages granted by two other important articles of the farman, viz. renting 38 villages in the neighbourhood of Calcutta and having free use of the mint at Murshidabad for three days in a week to coin their bullion.²⁸ Fateh Chand, the principal Bengal banker of the time, also 'hindered' the efforts of the English to secure free mintage at Murshidabad.²⁹

SUCCESSION TO MURSHID QULI KHAN

Murshid Quli Khan had no male issue. His daughter Zinat-un-nisa had been married to Shuja-ud-din Muhammad Khan, an Afshar Turk by descent. On Murshid Quli's appointment as diwan and nazim of Bengal and Orissa, Shuja-ud-din became his naib diwan in Orissa.³⁰ But the relations between the two did not long remain cordial, as Zinat-un-nisa, being a lady of pious disposition, could not reconcile herself to her husband's profligacy. Their son, Sarfaraz, however, enjoyed love and patronage of Murshid Quli, who managed to get him declared as the diwan of Bengal by Farrukh-sivar. Having no confidence in Shuja-ud-din, the old nawab nominated Sarfaraz as his successor before he died (30 June 1727).³¹

Murshid Quli Khan had remarkable strength of character. He was free from vices like drinking and debauchery. A devout Muslim, he was punctual in the observance of all injunctions of his faith as also in reading and copying the Quran. Himself proficient in different branches of Islamic learning, he showed due regard to men of erudition and piety.³²

Shuja-ud-din was not prepared to see his son placed on the Bengal masnad which he wanted for himself. To realize his aim, he with the assistance of his son Muhammad Taqi Khan (born of another wife) collected troops including some Europeans.³³ When he heard that Murshid Quli's end was impending, he marched to Bengal with a large army entrusting the government of Orissa to Muhammad Taqi

²⁶ *Ibid.* 16 August 1726.

²⁷ *Ibid.* 19 February 1727.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 6 December 1718, para 71, 29 November 1719, paras 71-72.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 31 January 1722, para 77.

³⁰ *Siyar* (Eng. trans.), I, 273, *Riyāz* (Eng. trans.), 254.

³¹ Letter to Court, 24 August 1727, para 15.

³² Gladwin, 64-67, *Riyāz* (Eng. trans.), 279-281.

³³ Letter to Court, 24 August 1727, para 15.

Khan. The news of Murshid Quli's demise reached him on the way, and when he was near Midnapur he obtained the imperial patent appointing him to the government of Bengal.³⁴ He then hurried to Murshidabad and proclaimed his accession at the Chihil Satun (palace of forty pillars built under the orders of Murshid Quli). Surfaraz did not contest his father's claim.

Shuja-ud-din's accession to the masnad of Bengal was duly confirmed by the emperor.³⁵ Being kept satisfied by various presents and timely remittance of the Bengal tribute, he honoured the new subahdar with the title of Mutaman-ul-mulk Shuja-ud-daulah Asad Jang.

SHUJA-UD-DIN AS NAWAB

The principal advisers of Shuja-ud-din in matters of administration were rai-i-rayan Alamchand, an able financier who had loyally served him in Orissa as diwan, Jagat Seth Fateh Chand, the famous banker, and two Muslim officers, Alivardi Khan and his brother Haji Ahmad. These two brothers had been much devoted to him since their first acquaintance with him in Orissa and they had greatly contributed to the success of his government there. The Seths of Murshidabad, possessed of untold wealth, had begun to exercise considerable influence on Bengal politics.

With the incorporation of Bihar into the Bengal subah by the emperor Muhammad Shah in or about 1733 Shuja-ud-din became the subahdar of an extensive administrative unit embracing the provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. For convenience of administration the entire area was parcelled out into four divisions: the central division, comprising western, central and a portion of northern Bengal; the Dacca division, covering eastern and southern Bengal, a small part of northern Bengal, Sylhet and Chittagong; the Bihar division; and the Orissa division. The nawab directly governed the central division through his council of advisers, and placed each of the rest in charge of a naib nazim or deputy governor.

Alivardi, faujdar of Akbarnagar (Rajmahal) since 1728, was appointed naib nazim of Bihar in or about 1733. He administered this province with vigour and efficiency till 1740. He reduced some of its refractory zamindars to submission, suppressed the Chakwars, a powerful and brave Hindu tribe with their stronghold at Sambho in the Begusarai sub-division of the district of Monghyr, and improved the

³⁴ It was obtained through the influence of Samsam-ud-daulah Khan-i-Dawran, a prominent noble of the Delhi court.

³⁵ Letter to Court, 28 January 1728, para 77.

finances not by imposition of additional taxes but by proper collection of the scheduled ones and recovery of the arrears from the defaulting zamindars. He also successfully co-operated with the Bengal army sent under the command of Mir Sharf-ud-din in chastising Badiuz-zaman, the Afghan zamindar of Birbhum, for non-payment of revenue and open defiance of the nawab's authority.³⁶ He was forced to submit but was pardoned by Shuja-ud-din on his promising due obedience to government orders and an annual remittance of three lakhs of rupees in addition to the usual presents.

Shuja-ud-din's son-in-law, Murshid Quli II, entrusted with the government of Dacca since the days of Murshid Quli Khan, received able assistance in the discharge of his duties from his loyal deputy (naib) Mir Habib who also succeeded in subduing the Hindu principality of Tripura and bringing it within the sphere of his master's influence. Murshid Quli II was transferred to Orissa after the death of its deputy governor, Muhammad Taqi Khan, in 1734, and the deputy governorship of Dacca was then formally conferred on Sarfaraz, who, however, instead of personally going to his seat of government, sent there Savvid Ghalib Ali Khan as his deputy. Jaswant Ray, experienced in the art of administration since his association with the government of Murshid Quli Khan as a munshi, was now made diwan of Dacca, and Murad Ali Khan a son of Nasifa Begam, uterine sister of Sarfaraz, was appointed superintendent (darogha) of the local fleet (nawarah). Jaswant Ray's conscientious work not only enhanced the revenues of the state but also contributed to the happiness of the people in various ways so that they could get all articles of prime necessity quite cheap, rice selling one seer a damri³⁷ or eight maunds a rupee. But this happy state of things did not last long as Murad Ali Khan, who had succeeded in obtaining the deputy governorship of Dacca in supersession of Ghalib Ali Khan through the influence of Nasifa Begam proved to be tactless and oppressive. Similarly, Mirza Savvid Ahmad, second son of Haif Ahmad, serving as naib faujdar of Ghorachat and Ranapur 'desolated those fine tracts by his oppressions'.³⁸ He forced the raias of Dinaipur and Rangpur to submit to the authority of the nawab's government and seized a considerable portion of their wealth.

Orissa flourished under the careful management of its naib nazim Murshid Quli II. He received useful assistance in his work from his deputy, Mir. Habib, who had accompanied him there from Dacca.

³⁶ *Riyâz* (Eng. trans.), 203.

³⁷ Eight damris = one dam. Forty dams = one rupee.

³⁸ *Riyâz* (Eng. trans.), 905.

The zamindars of this province were brought under effective control, and its financial resources were augmented.

Shuja-ud-din sent to the imperial government an annual tribute³⁹ of Rs 1,25,00,000, and the total amount remitted during his administration⁴⁰ of 11 years 8 months and 13 days amounted to Rs 14,62,78,538-13-0. He continued the old practice of revenue farming, and the standard assessment, as before, was Rs 1,42,45,561 a year.⁴¹ But he realised an additional amount of Rs 19,14,085 through four kinds of abwabs or imposts.⁴² The zamindars were required to pay these additional cesses in proportion to the standard assessment of each, but they in their turn were permitted to collect these from their tenants proportionately to 'their respective quotas of rent'. For paucity of relevant data it is not possible to form an accurate estimate of the effects of these impositions on the economic condition of the people in general. It may not be unreasonable to believe that, due to prosperous commerce and enhanced import of specie, "the resources of the country", as Shore notes, "were, at that period, adequate to the measures of exaction".⁴³ But "the mode of exaction", he points out, "was fundamentally ruinous, both to the ryots and the zamindars; and the direct tendency of it was, to force the latter into extortion, and all into fraud, concealment and distress". This subsequently produced pernicious effects during the second half of the eighteenth century when Bengal was subject to an all-round economic decline.

SHUJA-UD-DIN AND EUROPEAN TRADERS

Shuja-ud-din effectively asserted his authority over the European traders in Bengal. The Council in Calcutta described him as a 'rash and powerful subah'.⁴⁴ As the records of the English Company tell us, their trade in Bengal was occasionally impeded by what they refer to as the 'avaricious temper'⁴⁵ of the government and impositions of its officers in different parts of the province. The Company was often required to conciliate the nawab by large pecuniary payments. The Council in Calcutta gradually felt that "in relation to the im-

³⁹ Letter to Court, 29 November 1735, para 71.

⁴⁰ Grant does not seem to be correct in noting a lesser amount for this, i.e. Rs. 11,31,40,338-11-8. (Grant's Analysis in Firminger Fifth Report II 209-212.)

⁴¹ Shore's Minute, dated 18 June 1789, regarding the Permanent Settlement of the lands in the Bengal Province (Firminger, II, 7).

⁴² Firminger, Fifth Report, II, 209-212.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, II.

⁴⁴ Letter to Court, 26 December 1733, para 57.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* 16 January 1733, para 101.

positions of the government... it will be most advisable to submit to the expenses by making presents now and then to the under-officers of the Durbar and those that have authority in several other places (to prevent them) from doing them ill offices".⁴⁶ They also prudently avoided 'engaging in dispute with the government but then their privileges were attacked'.⁴⁷

Under instructions from the Court of Directors, the Council in Calcutta made an attempt, early in 1733, to get favourable orders from the Delhi court regarding their trade in Bengal. But it proved to be of no avail. They themselves admitted in November 1735 that the nawab of Bengal was 'too absolute to regard any orders from Court in their favour'.⁴⁸ Before the close of that year he demanded from them 'arrears of rent of their towns' since the date of their last payment of it to Murshid Quli Khan.⁴⁹ They had to satisfy the nawab in this respect by persuading him, through the mediation of Haji Ahgnad, to accept Rs 55,000, and thereafter on 6 July 1736 he issued parwanahs 'for the currency of their trade'.⁵⁰ Henceforth they were 'on very good terms' with him.⁵¹

SHUJA-UD-DIN'S CHARACTER

Most of the eighteenth-century Indian writers testify to the prevalence of peace and prosperity in Bengal during the regime of Shuja-ud-din. Shore, too, remarked in 1789 that it was 'moderate, firm and vigilant'.⁵² The government maintained an army of 25,000 men, equally divided into the two branches of infantry and cavalry. The early years of Shuja-ud-din's administration, we are told, 'evinced to the world that he was deserving of his good fortune'.⁵³ He was conciliatory towards the zamindars, conscientious in the discharge of state duties, solicitous of the welfare of his subjects, kind and bountiful towards his officers, and respectfully generous towards men of learning and piety. Having a scrupulous regard for justice, he dispensed it impartially.⁵⁴ Ghulam Husain, the author of *Siyār-ul-mutakhhārin* observes "the poorest suitor was sure of being in

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 28 December 1733, para 57.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 28 December 1735, para 87.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 29 November 1735, para 71.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 28 December 1735, para 66. The Dutch had to comply with a similar demand for their settlement at Baranagar near Calcutta.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 24 July 1736, para 4.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 20 July 1737, para 10.

⁵² Firminger, *Fifth Report*, II, 9.

⁵³ Stewart, *History of Bengal*, 478.

⁵⁴ Rydz (Eng. trans.), 290.

his presence upon a footing with his son; and the peaceful sparrow, certain of finding in his bosom a shelter against the hawk's pursuit, fled towards him with a perfect reliance on his goodness. People acquainted with history thought they lived in Naushirvan's reign.⁵⁵ Under his orders some stately buildings, chiefly for accommodation of offices, were erected at Murshidabad.

But a man's voluptuousness always proves to be his worst enemy and sooner or later dims the lustre of whatever qualities he may have been endowed with. So with all that he did during the first few years of his administration, Shuja-ud-din's excessive sensuality ultimately produced its natural consequences to the great prejudice of sound governance. His growing dissipation, in spite of the advance of age, marred his earlier interest, energy and capacity for good government; the affairs of state consequently passed under the exclusive control of his advisers, Haji Ahmad, Alamehānd, and Jagat Seth Fatch Chand. Without any chastening influence of the supreme authority or effective restraint from it, this 'triumvirate' degenerated into a selfish clique whose intrigues seriously affected the interests of the nawab's government and began to gnaw at its vitality, making its virtual collapse only a question of time.

SARFARAZ KHAN

After the death of Shuja-ud-din on 13 March 1739 his son Sarfaraz, entitled Ala-ud-daulah Haidar Lang, peacefully ascended the masnad of Bengal.⁵⁶ Devoid of strength of character and administrative ability, he was utterly unfit for the lofty position to which he found himself elevated. His excessive addiction to the pleasures of the harem, and too much insistence on the outward formalities of religion, naturally made him indolent and incapable of discharging the duties of the government.

The price that Sarfaraz paid for his worthlessness was indeed very heavy. It whetted the ambition of the old officers for absolute authority in the state, which led to a revolution costing him not only his throne but also his life. Haji Ahmad, Alivardi, Alamehānd and Jagat Seth Fatch Chand organized a conspiracy to snatch away the masnad from him and to transfer it to Alivardi. To give effect to the pre-conceived plan in this respect, Alivardi proceeded from Patna, with a large army and a powerful artillery, towards the end of March 1740, leaving his nephew Zain-ud-din Ahmad Khan as his deputy there. He marched towards Bengal after boldly overcoming the

⁵⁵ *Siyāsī* (Eng. trans.), I, 279.

⁵⁶ Letter to Court, 24 December 1739, para 123,

difficulties presented by nature in the almost inaccessible cliffs of the Rajmahal range extending southwards from Colgong. By a stratagem he overpowered the nawab's garrison in the fortress of Teliagarhi which stood on a strategic site blocking the defile between the foot of the hills and the Ganges against external invasions into Bengal proper.

Sarfraz had no knowledge at all of Alivardi's movements till he had crossed the Rajmahal hills. After this, too, as before, Haji Ahmad duped the nawab by false professions of loyalty to him, and succeeded in securing the latter's permission for himself and his family to join Alivardi in his camp at Rajmahal. Alivardi on his part played the same game of duplicity with Sarfraz by carrying on insincere negotiations with him even after the latter had marched, rather too late, from Murshidabad with a view to opposing him. But the nawab's devoted generals like Muhammad Ghous Khan, Mir Sharf-ud-din, Mardan Ali Khan and some others convinced him of Alivardi's double dealing with the ulterior motive of seizing the government of Bengal as soon as the time was ripe for it. It was now for the naked sword to decide the issue. Marching forward the two parties had a furiously contested engagement near Giria⁵⁷ on 10 April 1740. Heavy casualties in the nawab's army produced a stampede among his troops, but he himself continued to fight heroically till a musket-shot striking him on the forehead caused instantaneous death. Some of his cowardly followers at once took to their heels, but his faithful elephant driver carried his corpse to Murshidabad where it was buried in the compound of his palace.

Not at all disheartened by this terrible calamity, another section of Sarfraz's army, which had previously gone over to the west bank of the Bhagirathi under his brave and loyal commander Ghous Khan, was fighting there most gallantly. But this leader and his two sons, no less worthy than their father soon fell dead on the field after a heroic fight. Subsequently the desperate but chivalrous attempts of Panchu, the Portuguese superintendent of Sarfraz's artillery, and of the two loyal commanders—Mir Sharf-ud-din and Bijay Singh, a Rajput endowed with remarkable courage—proved to be of no avail.

ALIVARDI KHAN CONSOLIDATION OF AUTHORITY

The verdict of fortune went in favour of Alivardi. He was too

⁵⁷ *Siyār* (Eng. trans.), II, 492-93. *Riyāz* (Eng. trans.), 311, 317, 320. Yusuf, 16, 17. Salimullah, 100 a b Letter to Court, 4 August 1740. Giria lay on the east bank of the Bhagirathi at a distance of about five miles north-west of Jangipur in the Murshidabad district, West Bengal.

cool and calculating to be swayed by jubilance of victory, and so acted with ample caution to be able to reap its full benefits. He entered Murshidabad within a few days of Sarfaraz's death. But before formally ascending the masnad in the Chihil Satun (palace of forty pillars) he first endeavoured, with Machiavellian shrewdness, to appease the relations of the dead nawab by feigning repentance for his unbecoming conduct towards his benefactor's son. As a measure of conciliation he made some arrangement for the maintenance of the members of Sarfaraz's family. He also managed to secure imperial confirmation of his newly acquired position by winning over the debased imperial court of the time through money and fraud.

After consolidating his political position Alivardi took the precautionary step of effecting changes to his liking in the personnel of the government offices. His nephew Zain-ud-din Muhammad Khan, appointed deputy governor of Bihar, succeeded in consolidating his authority there with the co-operation of some able officers. He reduced to submission some of the powerful zaminars of Bihar and particularly followed a stern policy of repression towards the Ujjainia zamindars of Shahabad.

ALIVARDI KHAN. SUBJUGATION OF ORISSA

To bring Orissa under control proved to be a more difficult problem. Its deputy governor, Murshid Quli II Rustam Jang, goaded by his wife Dardaneh Begam and his son-in-law Mirza Baqar, refused to recognize the new nawab's authority. To oppose him he advanced from Cuttack in December 1740 with a strong army, and fixed his camp in the plains of Phulwari, about four miles north of Balasore town. On hearing this news Alivardi marched from Murshidabad in January 1741, leaving his brother, Hajji Ahmad, and his nephew, Nawazish Muhammad Khan (Shahamat Jang) in charge of the administration of Bengal. He reached Orissa with great difficulty. In a keenly contested battle fought in the plains of Phulwari on 3 March 1741 Alivardi met with initial reverses; but, betrayed by some of his generals, Rustam Jang was ultimately defeated. He retreated hurriedly to Masulipatam, not being able even to take the members of his family with himself. They were helped in their distress by Ramchandra Deva II (known as Hafiz Qadar after his conversion to Islam), zamindar of Khurdah and a devoted friend of Rustam Jang. They were brought over to Masulipatam by Mirza Baqar. Rustam Jang was forced in his adversity to take shelter in the Deccan,

Alivardi stayed in Orissa for one month more to effect administrative consolidation there. He returned to Murshidabad after appointing his nephew Sayyid Ahmad Khan (Saulat Jang) to take charge of the local government. But because of some grave defects in his character, the man of his choice proved to be utterly incompetent for the responsible task of governing a newly subjugated tract, which had been a centre of disaffection so recently. Intemperate, tactless and over-bearing in manners he made himself unpopular in no time. The troops who had come from Bengal went back discontented on account of his ill-advised reduction of their pay, and the new troops recruited in Orissa did not become loyal to the new nawab's nominee. Saulat Jang's enemies soon openly defied his authority and also organized a conspiracy against him. He was seized with his entire family. All this enabled Mirza Baqar to come back to Cuttack in August 1741 with a party of Maratha cavalry. Having placed Saulat Jang under strict confinement he established his own authority at Cuttack, advanced up to Midnapur and Hijli, and occupied these two places.

Saulat Jang's fate caused deep anxiety to Alivardi. His immediate rescue and chastisement of Mirza Baqar were considered by him to be very necessary not only for the personal safety of his near relations but also for vindication of the prestige and power of his government. So leaving his eldest nephew Shahamat Jang in charge of Murshidabad, he marched to Orissa with a large army as well as a powerful artillery. Being defeated at Raipur, on the southern bank of the Mahanadi, in December 1741, Mirza Baqar again ran away to the Deccan, evading capture by the nawab's army, through the help of Shah Murad Khan, commander-in-chief of the raja of Khurdah.⁵⁸ Saulat Jang and his family were rescued from captivity by some of the prominent guards of Alivardi and sent back to Murshidabad with a portion of the nawab's army, the rest being retained in Orissa by the nawab, who prolonged his stay there for about three months more with the object of making suitable arrangements for its administration. He appointed Shaikh Masum, one of his intimate friends and a brave general, deputy governor of Orissa with Durlabhram, son of raja Jankiram, as his peshkar. On his way back to Bengal he chastised Jagadisvara Bhanja, the raja of Mayurbhanj, for his alliance with the party of Mirza Baqar during the recent war, and subdued his territory.

⁵⁸ *Sifār* (Eng. trans.), II, 500-3. *Riyāz* (Eng. trans.), 332-36. Yusuf, 25-26. Salimullah, 111a, 114b. Letter to Court, 11 December 1741, 23 December 1741.

FIRST MARATHA INVASION (1742)

Thus by 1741 Alivardi had succeeded in suppressing all discontent and resistance to his authority throughout Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. But he was not destined to enjoy peacefully the kingdom that he had acquired by cleverly engineered plots and hard-fought battles. Even before his return to the capital, he heard at Jaygarh, near Midnapur, from the local revenue-collectors that the Marathas were marching into Bengal.

The north-eastern push of the Marathas was a phase of their triumphant imperialism in the pre-Panipat era. The ambition of Raghuji Bhonsle, the virtually independent chief of Nagpur, to dominate over the affairs of his master Shahu at Satara being foiled by the superior ability of Baji Rao I, he turned his attention towards the rich province of Bengal as a profitable sphere for plunder and expansion of his influence. Commissioned by him to invade Bengal and to collect chauth from the province,⁵⁹ his prime minister Bhaskar Ram marched, without any opposition, through Orissa and Pachet (modern Raniganj in the Burdwan district in West Bengal and the surrounding areas) and was about to attack Burdwan town when the nawab reached there after a quick march⁶⁰ on 15 April 1742. By constant skirmishes and plunders at Burdwan, the Marathas caused shortage of provisions among the nawab's troops as well as the people of that locality, and placed them in an extremely critical situation. Considering it inadvisable to prolong the stay there in an almost beleaguered condition, Alivardi fought his way to Katwa (35 miles north-east of Burdwan town) through the ranks of the enemy with his army much reduced in numbers and in the midst of severe privations. The sufferings of the nawab's troops in their march from Burdwan to Katwa for four days were acute.⁶¹ On reaching Katwa they found that the Marathas had entered that town before them, plundered its granaries and burnt such foodstuffs as they could not carry with them. Relief was, however, sent to the nawab's famished soldiers from Murshidabad. But a batch of the Marathas under Mir Habib (now in Maratha service) plundered Murshidabad early in May 1742, causing consternation among its inhabitants and the European factors, at Qasimbazar (in the district of Murshidabad, West Bengal). On hearing of all this Alivardi marched hurriedly from Katwa and reached Murshidabad⁶² on 7 May 1742. The Marathas thereafter went away to Katwa, plundering all the villages on the way.

⁵⁹ *Siyār* (Eng. trans.), II, 507. Yusuf, 28.

⁶⁰ Letter to Court, 31 July 1742

⁶¹ We get a graphic description of these in the work of Yusuf Ali (*Aḥwāl-i-'Afṣādī Khan*) who was present in the company.

⁶² Letter to Court, 8 January 1743, para 100.

The Marathas were inclined to return to their country on the eve of the rainy season, but Mir Habib persuaded them to cancel this programme. Under his advice they began to make efforts to bring different parts of West Bengal under their control. They captured the important fort of Hugli and installed Sis Rao as their governor there. With Katwa as their head-quarters in Bengal, they intended to advance beyond the Hugli river and even towards Dacca; but they could not do so because of timely precautions on the part of the English East India Company⁶³ as well as the nawab's government.⁶⁴ As a means of defence, the English in Calcutta began, with the nawab's permission, the construction of an entrenchment which came to be known as the Maratha Ditch.

There was cessation of active fighting between the nawab's troops and the Marathas during the rains of 1742, but the latter then continued their ravages in the tracts extending over the present districts of Burdwan, Murshidabad, Nadia, Birbhum and Midnapur in West Bengal, the Santal Parganas in Bihar, and also over Orissa as far as Balasore, perpetrating, as we read in some contemporary accounts, horrible cruelties on their unfortunate inhabitants. For security of honour and wealth some people of West Bengal migrated to eastern and northern Bengal. Wutes Gangarama, an eye witness, in his Bengali poem, *Maharāshtrapurāṇa*:

"The Brahmans and the Pandits ran away with their books, the *sonai banias* (goldsmiths) with their weights and measures, the *gandha-baniks* (grocers, druggists, and perfumers) and the *Kansaris* (bell-metal workers) after closing their shops, the blacksmiths and the potters with their implements, the fishermen with their nets and ropes, and the *sankha-baniks* (conch-dealers) with their own articles. The *kayasthas* and the *taidyas* followed suit. The *kshetris* and the Rajputs fled away leaving their swords behind, the *kaivartas* and the agriculturists did the same with their ploughs and with paddy-seeds on the back of their oxen. The *shaikhs*, the Sayyids, the Mughals and the Pathans ran out of their villages... Suddenly the Bargis surrounded these run-away people in the field and plundered their gold and silver... They cut off the hands of some, noses and ears of others, and killed many. They even ravished beautiful women, entered into the villages and set fire to the houses."⁶⁵

⁶³ Letter to Court, 30 October 1742, para 6; 31 July 1742, 8 January 1743, paras 9, 81, 101. Wilson, *Old Fort William*, I, 156-81.

⁶⁴ Muhammad Wafa, *Waqa'i Fath Bangālah*, 21b.

⁶⁵ The tale of atrocities is given also by other contemporary writers, such as Veneswara Vidyalankara (the court pandit of the raja of Burdwan), Salimullah, Ghulam Husain Salīq, Yusuf Ali and Holwell.

The respite from open engagements with the Marathas during the rainy season was utilized by the nawab from his camps at Amaniganj and Tarakpur, near the suburbs of Murshidabad city, to replenish his troops in view of a contemplated conflict with the Marathas. His nephew Zain-ud-din and Saif Khan, governor of Purnea (in Bihar), came from their respective places to assist him in this venture. Thus reinforced, the nawab attacked Bhaskar Ram all on a sudden while he had been celebrating the Durga Puja festival at Dnaihat, a village about five miles south-east of Katwa, and compelled the main body of the Marathas to run away towards Katwa. The fugitives encamped on the west bank of the river Bhagirathi facing the river Ajay. Alivardi crossed both these rivers and made a surprise attack on their camp. Disconcerted, they took to their heels through Pachet, Bankura, Midnapur and Orissa, being chased by the nawab's troops ultimately beyond the Chilka Lake in December 1742. On the way they 'burnt and plundered Radhanagar and other towns' and killed Shaikh Masum, deputy governor of Orissa, at Jaipur. Appointing Abdul Nabi Khan, uncle of Mustafa Khan, to succeed Shaikh Masum, Alivardi returned to Murshidabad on 10 February 1743 after about two months' stay in Orissa.⁶⁶

SAFDAR JANG IN BIHAR (1742)

There was, however, no rest for him. Before the first Maratha invasion had been repelled, a new menace had appeared in Bihar. Commissioned by the emperor Muhammad Shah to assist Alivardi against the Maratha invaders Safdar Jang, subahdar of Awadh, proceeded to Bihar. But on entering Patna city on 7 December 1742 he began to act not as a helper but as a virtual dictator by ignoring the rights and sentiments of some of the local officers, exacting nazars from all of them as also from the local mansabdars, zamindars and jagirdars, and forbidding 'all intercourse with Bengal' which caused much inconvenience to the English factors there.⁶⁷ On Alivardi's protest against all this he left Bihar for his dominions in January 1743.

SECOND MARATHA INVASION (1743)

But Bengal was exposed to more serious troubles before long. At Bhaskar's instigation Raghujī Bhonsle marched with a large army

⁶⁶ Letter to Court, 30 October 1742, paras 6, 25; 8 January 1743, para 90; 15 February 1743. *Siyār* (Eng. trans.), II, 517-19, 591. Yusuf, 38-40. *Riyāz* (Eng. trans.), 345-346. *Muzaffar Nāma*, 43, 43a, 43b.

⁶⁷ Letter to Court, 8 January 1743.

in February 1743 on the plea of realising the chauth of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. At the same time the peshwa, Balaji Baji Rao, entered Bihar with another Maratha army ostensibly in compliance with the request of the short-sighted emperor of Delhi to expel his rival Raghaji. The peshwa's army did not spare blackmailing and harassing the people of places like Tikari, Gaya, Manpur, Monghyr and Bhagalpur in Bihar through which they passed before reaching the plain of Bengal. After crossing the Rajmahal hills with the help of a local guide⁶⁸ the peshwa advanced up to Mankarah, ten miles south of Murshidabad city; Raghaji had meantime encamped near Katwa. In a conference between Alivardi and the peshwa, held at Plassey on 31 March 1743, the former undertook to pay the chauth of Bengal to Shahu, and conciliated the peshwa by paying him 22 lakhs of rupees on his promising to effect such an arrangement with Raghaji as to stop his future incursions into Bengal. The allied troops of the nawab and the peshwa succeeded in expelling Raghaji, and the peshwa too soon returned to Poona. Both the Maratha armies went out of Bengal by the end of May 1743.⁶⁹

THIRD MARATHA INVASION (1744)

But the ambitious Berar chief again sent an expedition into Bengal in the beginning of March 1744⁷⁰ under his generals Bhaskar Pandit and Ali Bhai Qarawwal, a Maratha leader who had embraced Islam.⁷¹ Taking into consideration the comparative exhaustion of his army, depletion of the state treasury and shattered condition of his own health, Alivardi now resolved not to oppose Bhaskar openly in the field but to kill him by a stratagem. Transmission of sweet messages and presents enabled him to hoodwink Bhaskar so that the latter met him at Mankarah on 31 March with only a few generals and without adequate precautions. There he and his companions were murdered under Alivardi's orders. Many of the leaderless Maratha soldiers were killed by some of the Afghan generals of the nawab; the rest were furiously chased away.⁷² Some roving bands of Marathas in certain parts of West Bengal fled away pell-mell. The whole Maratha army fled out of the province.⁷³ Alivardi returned to Murshidabad and distributed ten lakhs of rupees as reward among his soldiers.

⁶⁸ Holwell, *Interesting Historical Events*, 137-41.

⁶⁹ Letter to Court, 13 August 1743.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 3 August 1744, para 8.

⁷¹ *Riyâz* (Eng. trans.), 347.

⁷² *Siyâr* (Eng. trans.), II, 329 30. *Riyâz* (Eng. trans.), 348. *Muzaffar Nâmâ*, 46ab.

⁷³ Letter to Court, 3 August 1744, para 8.

FOURTH MARATHA INVASION (1745)

Raghaji could hardly put up with this disgrace and loss. Bent upon avenging the assassination of Bhaskar, he took advantage of the rebellion of the nawab's foremost Afghan general, Mustafa Khan, to lead an incursion into his territories and entered Orissa in March 1745.⁷⁴ After bringing Orissa under his control he reached the neighbourhood of Calcutta in May,⁷⁵ entered Burdwan in June,⁷⁶ and Birbhum in July (1745).⁷⁷ Marching towards Bihar at the end of the rainy season of 1745, he joined the Afghans, who had been spending their days in distress in the mountains of Magror near Chainpur and Sasaram since the defeat and death of Mustafa Khan near Jagadishpur, 18 miles south-west of Arrah, on 20 June 1745. After some furious but indecisive engagements with the nawab's army at different places in Bihar and Bengal, Raghaji was defeated near Katwa in December 1745, and was forced to retreat to Nagpur. But many of his followers remained scattered in different parts of West Bengal and continued their plundering activities.⁷⁸ Practically the whole of Orissa remained under the control of Mir Habib, the friend of the Marathas.

Considering that it would not be advisable to postpone the recovery of Orissa, Alivardi soon appointed Mir Jafar Khan, paymaster of his army, to take charge of Orissa as its deputy governor, he was at the same time made fanjdar of Midnapur and Hijli. After marching from Murshidabad in November 1746,⁷⁹ Mir Jafar defeated Sayvid Nur, a lieutenant of Mir Habib, near Midnapur, about 12 December 1746.⁸⁰ But the reinforcement of Mir Habib's party by a large body of troops under Janoji, son of Raghaji, and the treachery of Mir Jafar Khan as well as Ataullah Khan Sabit Jang prevented immediate recovery of Orissa by the Bengal army. The disgraceful conduct of his two prominent generals did not, however, unnerve Alivardi in the least. Though more than seventy years old, he personally marched with an army against the Marathas, who, being defeated in a hotly contested battle near Burdwan, ran away to Midnapur. To avoid the rains the nawab came back to his capital, and in 1747 the Marathas regained influence over Orissa up to Midnapur.⁸¹

⁷⁴ *Siyār* (Eng. trans.), II, 546.

⁷⁵ Wilson, *Old Fort William*, I, 182.

⁷⁶ Letter to Court, 11 August 1745, para 9.

⁷⁷ Yusuf, 58. *Siyār* (Eng. trans.), II, 547.

⁷⁸ Letter to Court, 31 January 1746, para 122; 22 February 1747, para 93.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.* 30 November 1746, para 113.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.* 22 February 1747, para 110.

⁸¹ *Ibid.* 24 February 1748.

FIFTH MARATHA INVASION (1748)

The nawab's embarrassments on the outbreak of the second Afghan insurrection in 1748 afforded a splendid opportunity to the Marathas to advance once again into Bengal proper. The main body under Janoji marched from Midnapur to a place near Burdwan and there were 'several straggling parties of them about the country' (Bengal).⁸² Some of them were even trying to proceed towards Dacca, some had reached Tanna's Fort near Calcutta, while many entered into Murshidabad and plundered some goods of the English Company at Qasimbazar. Both the parties of the Marathas under Janoji and Mir Habib joined the Afghan insurgents near Patna. But the allied troops were defeated by the nawab at Ranisarai, 8 miles west of Barh, on 18 April 1748.⁸³ On hearing of his mother's death Janoji went away to Nagpur, Mir Habib being left at Midnapur with the major portion of the army. Soon reinforced by a batch of cavalry under Sabaji, younger son of Raghaji, Mir Habib effectively maintained Maratha hold over Orissa.

In the summer of the next year (1749) Alivardi marched into Orissa, and after effecting its recovery from Maratha control appointed a cavalry officer, named Shah Abdus Subhan Khan, deputy governor of that province. But within a week since he had commenced his return journey towards Murshidabad, the Marathas re-occupied Cuttack early in June.⁸⁴ It was not possible for him to resume at once the task of their immediate expulsion as the rainy season was about to set in and his army had been overstrained. The effects of strenuous exertions to ward off the repeated Maratha incursions had begun to tell upon his health in his old age. Soon after his return to Murshidabad early in July⁸⁵ he remained seriously ill till October. In fact, the Marathas were then free to pillage different parts of Orissa. They caused alarm to the English factors at Cuttack, and a party of them created disturbances near Calcutta in the month of December.⁸⁶

Realising the need of prompt action for extinguishing the Maratha menace, Alivardi marched to Midnapur in December 1749. But while he had been encamped there, some thousands of Marathas marched past him early in March 1750, and plundered the country as far as Rajmahal. Thereafter they dashed upon Murshidabad and had a

⁸² Consultations, 25 February 1748.

⁸³ Letter to Court, 19 November 1748, para 80.

⁸⁴ Consultations, 19 June 1749.

⁸⁵ Ibid, 6 July 1749.

⁸⁶ Ibid, 18 October 1749; 21 December 1749; 22 December 1749.

skirmish with the troops under Mir Jafar who was obliged to retreat nearer the city. The two armies were then encamped near each other, and the Marathas daily sent out parties to burn and plunder all around them.⁸⁷ Returning temporarily to Burdwan, the nawab chased the Marathas from place to place. He soon went back to Midnapur, determined to stay there for some time to crush the Maratha menace for ever.

But Alivardi had to march to Bihar quickly to counteract the evil effects of an ill-advised attempt on the part of his grandson, Siraj-ud-daulah, in June 1750 to make himself the sole governor of Bihar by removing the nawab's agent raja Jankiram. He effected a reconciliation between his grandson and Jankiram, who ably administered Bihar till his death in 1752. Though attacked with high fever at Patna, the nawab hurried back to Murshidabad, as the Midnapur area still remained disturbed due to Maratha ravages. Without taking sufficient rest in the weak state of his health, he proceeded to Midnapur in December 1750 and chased Mir Habib to Orissa. The nawab thereupon returned to Katwa,⁸⁸ but there he heard that a party of the Marathas was plundering the tracts near Bhagalpur and in Birbhum. In February 1751 he removed to Amaniganj, near Murshidabad city, 'with intentions, as it was said, to proceed' towards Birbhum.⁸⁹

ALIVARDI'S TREATY WITH MARATHAS (1751)

Hard, expensive and almost unceasing, though fruitless as well as indecisive, campaigning for not less than eight years produced a reaction in both camps and made both parties eager for a compromise. So they concluded a treaty in May or June 1751. The nawab agreed to pay to the Marathas an annual chauth of 12 lakhs of rupees, with effect from October 1751, on condition that they would 'never set their foot again' within his dominions or cross the river Suvarnarekha which was fixed as the boundary of the Bengal subah. Mir Habib was to hold the office of the deputy governor of Orissa on behalf of Alivardi, but the surplus revenues of the province were to be spent for payment of Raghujī's soldiers.⁹⁰ He was not, however, destined to hold this position for long. Jealous of his promotion, his enemies managed to get him murdered on 4 September 1752 under orders of Janoji, who had then come to Orissa as commander of the Maratha infantry stationed there.

⁸⁷ Letter to Court, 24 August 1750, para 84. Yusuf, 101.

⁸⁸ *Siyār* (Eng. trans.), II, 590. Consultations 6 September 1751.

⁸⁹ Letter to Court, 20 August 1751, para 96.

⁹⁰ CPC, II, 331-32. *Siyār* (Eng. trans.), II, 591.

EFFECTS OF MARATHA INVASIONS

The repeated incursions of the Marathas produced some far-reaching effects on Bengal. The important political effect was the establishment of Maratha supremacy in Orissa. The treaty of 1751 did not, of course, provide for the cession of Orissa to the Marathas; it only assigned to them the revenues of its southern part. Even so, while Orissa remained theoretically under the suzerainty of the nawab of Bengal, the Marathas actually governed it as part of the Bhonsle dominions. Besides, the Maratha raids into Bengal did not cease; these continued for many years.⁹¹ On the other hand, the Maratha incursions were indirectly helpful for the English. They took precautions for the defence of Calcutta against the Marathas. Their collaboration in this matter with the inhabitants of the town served to create in the minds of the latter a spirit of goodwill for, and a sense of confidence in the English.⁹²

The ravages of the Marathas and the consequential dislocation of normal activities of all classes of people badly affected the economy of the province. Agriculture, industry, trade and commerce—all were seriously affected; and the losses could not be made good after 1751. In fact, the pre-Plassey period left a legacy of economic decline which was aggravated by quick political revolutions and other factors.

In the social sphere, the migration of a large number of people from the western to the eastern and northern districts of Bengal, as also to the English settlement at Calcutta led to a number of important changes. The density of population went down in the western part, and increased in the eastern and northern parts. Calcutta prepared itself for the prominence which it was soon to acquire as a result of the establishment of the Company as the *de facto* ruler of the province. Some Maratha families settled about this time in certain parts of Bengal.

AFGHAN INSURRECTIONS (1745, 1748)

The Afghans of Bihar possessed of brilliant fighting qualities, rendered valuable services to Alivardi when he was deputy governor of that province and also during the first four years of his subahdarship of Bengal. But soon their relations became strained for certain reasons of which the most important was the high ambition of the Afghan leader, Mustafa Khan, for greater power and influence in

⁹¹ *Journal of Indian History*, December 1938.

⁹² *Vangya Sahitya Patrika* Vol. VIII Part IV, p. 206.

the state. After resigning the nawab's service Mustafa Khan left Murshidabad for Patna towards the end of February 1745, to snatch away the government of Bihar from Zain-ud-din Ahmad Khan. Determined to frustrate the ambition of the Afghan rebels, the latter took necessary precautions and strengthened his army with the assistance of some local nobles and some zamindars of the province. Mustafa Khan arrived near Patna on 14 March and attacked Zain-ud-din's army which was encamped in Jafar Khan's garden just to the east of the city. Zain-ud-din's troops suffered reverses, but the death of Mustafa's elephant-driver caused some panic among the latter's troops. Yet Mustafa Khan continued to fight for seven days. Then he lost one of his eyes from gunshot and became senseless; his soldiers ran away with him to Mitapur (site of the Patna Junction railway station). Mustafa recovered his senses there, but Zain-ud-din chased the Afghans beyond Naubatpur (13 miles south-west of Patna Junction railway station) and Muhib Alipur (on the east bank of the Son river, 19 miles south-west of Naubatpur). Alivardi soon joined him to expel the Afghan rebels beyond the frontiers of Bihar as far as Zamania, lying opposite to Ghazipur.

Undaunted by this discomfiture, Mustafa soon assembled a large army with which he marched back to Bihar and allied himself with the zamindars of Shahabad, who were not on good terms with Zain-ud-din. To check him in time Zain-ud-din left Patna on 2 June 1745 and inflicted a crushing defeat on the Afghans at Jagdishpur (18 miles south-west of Arrah town) on 20 June. Mustafa Khan lost his life and his son, Murtaza Khan, fled away with his followers to Magror (14 miles west of Chainpur on the bank of the Karamnisa river). As a punishment for the intrigues of the Afghans with the Maratha chief, Raghunji Bhonsle, during the latter's invasion of Bihar in September 1745, Alivardi dismissed all of them from his service in June 1746. Thereafter they proceeded to their respective homes in Darbhanga in north Bihar.⁹³

But this did not mean the collapse of the Afghan menace for Alivardi. In 1748, when there was a general Afghan revival throughout north India, it assumed a more formidable shape in the east. Strangely enough, Alivardi's nephew Zain-ud-din was to some extent responsible for it. In his intense eagerness to seize the government of Bengal from his aged uncle, Zain-ud-din wanted to enlist the service of the Afghan generals of Darbhanga under their leaders Shamshir Khan, Murad Sher Khan, Sardar Khan and Bakshi Bahelia.

⁹³ *Muzaffar Nāmā*, 61b, 62b, 63b, 64b, 65ab, 67ab, 68a, *Wāqā'ī Path Bangālah*, 90a, 31ab, 32a, 33a, 35ab, 36ab, 38a, 39b, 41b, 42ab, 43ab, 63a, *Yūmūf*, 52-58, *Siyār* (Eng. trans.), II, 535-39, 541-45. Letter to Court, 11 August 1745.

He arranged for a ceremonial interview with them on 13 January 1748 in the Chihil Satun where, to create confidence in the minds of the Afghans about his friendliness, he kept no guards for personal defence. His ambition and folly cost him his life. The Afghans cut his limbs into pieces.

In the midst of the general confusion following the murder of Zain-ud-din the revengeful Afghans entered his palace, got 70 lakhs of rupees in cash as well as a large quantity of jewels and bullion, inflicted such cruel tortures on Haji Ahmad for more than two weeks that he expired from their effect on 20 January, and treated the members of his family disgracefully. The ranks of the Afghans were strengthened daily by fresh recruits; they were also reinforced by the Marathas under Mir Habib and Janoji. For full three months of Afghan usurpation, the city of Patna experienced acute agonies; the miseries of its inhabitants knew no limits due to indiscriminate plunder by the Afghan soldiers. This has been graphically described by all the important Indian writers of the time.⁹⁴ Ghulam Husain, a citizen of Patna, observes that they "being restrained by no discipline, nor overawed by any constraint spread throughout every quarter of that unfortunate city, where not a day passed without some houses undergoing all the horrors of violence and defilement. Many families were dishonoured by them and very few had the fortune to escape the infamous practices of that nation of miscreants."⁹⁵

Such a state of affairs rendered the immediate recovery of Patna from the Afghan usurpers a matter of vital concern to Alivardi. Securing complete allegiance of his army for this task and making due arrangements for the defence of Murshidabad in his absence, he left his camp at Amaniganj for Patna on 29 February 1748.⁹⁶ On the way he was joined at Sultanganj near Bhagalpur by 1,500 men sent by Saif Khan, governor of Purnea, and at Monghyr by raja Sundar Singh of Tikari and Kamgar Khan Mavi, zamindar of Nashat and Samami. He came out victorious in a furious engagement with the Afghans on 16 April 1748⁹⁷ at Ranisarai, 8 miles west of Barh. On the death of their leaders Sardar Khan, Murad Sher Khan and Shamshir Khan in the course of the fighting the Afghans ran away from the field in utter confusion. The Marathas followed suit.⁹⁸

⁹⁴ *Siyār* (Eng. trans.), II, 557-63. Yusuf, 72-74. *Wāqā'i Fath Bangīlāh*, 48a, 48b, 49ab, 50 a. Karam Ali, 51a-52b. Salimullah, 129a. Letter to Court, 19 November 1748.

⁹⁵ *Siyār* (Eng. trans.), II, 562.

⁹⁶ Consultations, 8 March 1748.

⁹⁷ Letter to Court, 19 November 1748, para 84.

⁹⁸ *Siyār* (Eng. trans.), II, 566-67.

After a brief halt on the way Alivardi entered Patna to the great joy of his surviving relations and the people of that city. He found himself relieved of the Afghan menace by the first week of May 1748.⁹⁹ The goods and effects of the Afghans at Darbhanga were seized by some agents of the nawab, who, however, meted out chivalrous treatment to the widow and daughter of Shamshir Khan by making suitable arrangements for their comfortable living and the marriage of the latter. He returned to Murshidabad in November 1748 after formally appointing Siraj-ud-daulah deputy governor of Bihar, raja Jankiram being entrusted with the actual work of administration. After Jankiram's death in 1752 his office was given to his diwan Ramnarain who held it with success till 1761.

The Afghan insurrection of 1748 was not a mere local rebellion; it was a sort of direct challenge to Alivardi's rule. It gathered strength from the support of Afghan adventurers from different parts of northern India and also from the victories of Ahmad Shah Abdali. Afghan chiefs had made themselves masters of Farrukhabad and Ruhelkhand. The Afghans were making a fresh bid for power on the ruins of the Mughal empire.

ALIVARDI AND EUROPEAN TRADERS

Fully conscious of the importance of foreign trade for the economic prosperity of his subah, Alivardi did not wilfully injure the interests of the traders, whether European or Asiatic. "He understood perfectly well", writes Jean Law, "the interests of his government, favoured the poor merchants, and administered justice when complaints succeeded in reaching him".¹⁰⁰ The Council in Calcutta observed in 1747 that it had been "customary at these *Durbars* of the Nawabs to allow merchants to settle their accounts in a fair manner whenever it has been required by either party".¹⁰¹ Serafton remarks that Alivardi "used to compare the Europeans to a hive of bees of whose honey you might reap the benefit, but that if you disturbed their hive they would sting you to death".¹⁰²

A contemporary French writer remarked that Alivardi was 'very fond of the Europeans and they all feared the moment of his death because of the disturbances which might then take place'.¹⁰³ Bisdom, the Dutch Director at Chinsura, observed in his petition to Siraj-

⁹⁹ Letter to Court, 19 November 1748, para 85.

¹⁰⁰ Hill, Bengal in 1756-57, III, 180.

¹⁰¹ Letter to Court, 22 February 1747, para 189.

¹⁰² Reflections on the Government of Indostan, 52.

¹⁰³ Hill, II, 216.

ud-daulah, dated 26 June 1756, that they "generally had been befriended and countenanced by Princes of the land and, up to the glorious Nawab Souja-ul-mulk Mahabat Jung (Alivardi) inclusive, always endowed with privileges".¹⁰⁴ Holwell's charge that in his deathbed speech the nawab instructed his grandson and heir-designate, Siraj-ud-daulah, to 'reduce' the power of the Europeans, is a veritable concoction. It is amply refuted by the unimpeachable evidence of some relevant contemporary documents.¹⁰⁵ It was not on 'groundless pretences', as the Council at Fort St George wrongly informed Admiral Watson in 1756,¹⁰⁶ but under grave necessities due to repeated Maratha invasions, that Alivardi realized contributions from the English, Dutch and French Companies for the defence of the province, on the ground that "they participated of (in) the protection of his arms"¹⁰⁷ and enjoyed the benefits of trade.¹⁰⁸ In 1744 he passed orders stopping the trade of the English East India Company until they had complied with his demand for three million rupees which he required for clearance of two months' arrear pay of his soldiers. Military guards were stationed at the *gurrah*¹⁰⁹ *aurungs*¹¹⁰ and some *gomastas* of the English were arrested. These restrictions were removed when the chief of the Qasimbazar factory agreed to pay him three lakhs and a half. In addition, the factors at Qasimbazar, Patna and Dacca were required to satisfy the local officers of the nawab's government at their respective places by separate payments.

But again in the year 1748 on the complaint of the Armenian and Mughal merchants against the capture of some of their mercantile vessels by Commodore Griffin, the nawab adopted certain measures of reprisal against the English Company for redress of their grievances. The ban on the trade of the English Company was not removed till October 1752,¹¹¹ when they were able to persuade the Armenians to express satisfaction about their losses and also to pay one and a half lakhs of rupees to the nawab. Thus Alivardi effectively controlled the trade of the Europeans in Bengal whenever necessary.

The nawab was also very keen about enforcing his control over

104 *Ibid.*, I, 29-30.

105 Hill, II, 129-162; III, 336. *Suru* (Eng. trans.) II, 611. *Muzaffar Nâmâ* (Eng. trans.) *Bengal, Past and Present*, 1949.

106 Hill, I, 199.

107 Orme, II, 45-46.

108 Hill, III, 289.

109 A species of coarse cotton cloth.

110 Places where articles of trade were manufactured and collected for wholesale disposal or export.

111 Consultations, 11 October 1752.

them in other respects. "He was", writes Jean Law, "zealous of his authority. He specially affected a great independence whenever there was a question of any affair between himself and the Europeans. To speak to him of *firman*s or of privileges obtained from the Emperor was only to anger him. He knew well how to say at the proper moment that he was both King and Wazir."¹¹² With his knowledge of the distracted condition of Peninsular India consequent upon it being a theatre of war between the English and the French, he was determined to prevent them from jumping into the field of politics in Bengal. "He saw with equal indignation and surprise", Jean Law observes, "the progress of the French and the English nations on the Coromandel coast as well as in the Deccan, for by means of his spies he was informed of every thing that happened there . . . He feared that sooner or later the Europeans would attempt similar enterprises in his government."¹¹³ In July 1745 he issued a parwanah ordering the English, the French and the Dutch to observe strict neutrality within his dominions from point Palmyras, on the coast of the Bay of Bengal, to the south of Balasore. Except once in 1748, when the French at Chandernagar temporarily occupied the Dutch Company's garden of Champonade,¹¹⁴ the Europeans dared not violate this neutrality in Bengal and to commence open hostilities in this province till, after Alivardi's death, the outbreak of the Seven Years' War in Europe influenced political conditions in India.

Alivardi was also opposed to the attempts of the English and the French to strengthen their fortifications in Calcutta and Chandernagar respectively because he justly apprehended enhancement of their power. "You are merchants", he often remarked before the English and French vikils, "what need have you of a fortress? Being under my protection you have no enemies to fear."¹¹⁵ But during the troubled years towards the close of his career, in 1755-56, the English Company in Calcutta began without any concealment to repair and strengthen their fortifications.¹¹⁶

ALIVARDI KHAN AS A RULER

Alivardi was a tactful, wise and efficient ruler, always solicitous of the welfare of his subjects. The repeated Maratha inroads and the

¹¹² Hill, III, 160.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 160-61.

¹¹⁴ Consultations, 3 January 1749. This garden was 'in the centre of Fort Gustavas having three terraces, rising one above the other ornamented with flowers'. Long Selections from Unpublished Records of the Government of India, I, 15.

¹¹⁵ Hill, II, 160-61.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, I, xlvi.

Afghan insurrections made the first eleven years of his administration a period of tremendous strain for himself, and during it he could not do much of constructive work conducive to the material interests of the Bengal subah. But with comparative security after his treaty with the Marathas in 1751 he devoted himself to measures of reconstruction to undo the baneful effects of warfare extending for more than eight years. Henceforth he "applied himself with judgement and alacrity to the repose and security of his subjects and never afterwards deviated in smallest degree from these".¹¹⁷

Alivardi encouraged rural reconstruction and uplift in all possible ways. The ryots were not subjected to arbitrary revenue assessments. "The custom was then to settle the *malguzari* (revenue assessment) with the different zamindars on moderate terms; the Nawab (Alivardi) abided by this agreement; the zamindars had a natural interest in their districts and gave proper encouragement to the ryots (peasant cultivators), when necessary would wait for their rents, and borrow money to pay their own *malguzari* punctually. There were in all districts shroffs (money-lenders, bankers) ready to lend money to zamindars when requested and even to the Ryots, which enabled many to cultivate their grounds which otherwise they could not have done."¹¹⁸

No additional pecuniary demands were made by the state on the masses of the people. But to meet the financial exigencies caused by the external and internal troubles during the first few years of his government, Alivardi had to take casual aid and realize extra contributions from the European trading companies, and from some prominent zamindars of the province, such as raja Ramkanta of Rajshahi, raja Rammath of Dinajpur, and maharaja Krishna Chandra of Nadia, whose jurisdiction remained free from Maratha ravages.¹¹⁹ Like Murshid Quli Khan and Shuja-ud-din Muhammad Khan, he also levied abwabs (additional impositions) on the zamindars in general, the total of these during the entire period of his administration amounting to Rs 22,25,554.¹²⁰

ALIVARDI'S CHARACTER

If invasions from without and military insurrections within terribly disturbed the earlier years of Alivardi's regime, some premature

¹¹⁷ CPC, II, pp. 191, 197.

¹¹⁸ Letter of Richard Beecher to Secret Committee of Court of Directors, 24 May 1769.

¹¹⁹ Firminger, II, 217.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 11.

bereavements in his family rendered his last days very unhappy. These naturally caused depression of mind in his old age and seriously affected his health. A fatal attack of dropsy carried him away on 9 (or 10) April 1756.

Early training in the school of adversity had enabled him to develop remarkable strength of character. Possessed of a puritanic temperament and a religious turn of mind, he was free from the vices of drunkenness and debauchery, so commonly prevalent among the members of the aristocracy in those days. Orme has justly observed that "his private life was very different from the usual manners of a Mahometan prince in Indostan; for he was always extremely temperate, had no pleasures, kept no seraglio and always lived the husband of one wife".¹²¹ With implicit faith in God, he often invoked His grace in moments of crisis during his campaigns and thus derived inspiration to fight successfully with heroism and courage. A brave warrior he knew, writes Jean Law, then chief of the French factory at Qasimbazar, 'how to command an army'.¹²² Ghulam Husain notes that "in generalship he had no equal in his age except Asaf Jah Nizam-ul-mulk".¹²³ Regular in daily habits, he devoted proper attention to each duty at the right moment. He was kind and generous towards his relations, friends, officers and ordinary servants, all of whom enjoyed his frequent bounty. He was a patron of arts and letters, and a number of scholars, well versed in different branches of learning, flourished in his court. He spent some of his leisure hours in the study of works on theology and history.

Love of political power led him, however, to commit some unworthy acts. He was, observes Jean Law, 'deceitful and ambitious in the highest degree'.¹²⁴ The treacherous assassination of Abdul Karim Khan Ruhela under his orders during his deputy governorship of Bihar, his ingratitude to Sarfaraz Khan, and the massacre of Bhaskar Pandit and his followers are wholly indefensible.

Like many other rulers he fell into dotage during the closing years of his life and selected his spoilt grandson Siraj-ul-daulah as his successor. Those disruptive forces which he had controlled with considerable tact and prudence began to assert themselves, and the logic of events irresistibly drove the political affairs in Bengal towards revolution and loss of independence.

¹²¹ Hill, I, xxx.

¹²² *Ibid.*, III, 160.

¹²³ *Siyâr* (Eng. trans.), II, 500.

¹²⁴ Hill, III, 160.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE DECCAN UNDER THE ASAFAJAHI NIZAMS

EARLY CAREER OF NIZAM-UL-MULK : REIGN OF AURANGZIB

KUWAJA ABID, GRANDFATHER of Nizam-ul-mulk, traced his descent from Abu Bakr the first Khalifah. From Bukhara he came to India towards the close of Shah Jahan's reign, joined Aurangzib in the war of succession, rose high in his favour, and fell in the siege of Golconda in 1687. His eldest son, Shihab-ud-din Khan, later known as Ghazi-ud-din Khan Firuz Jang, came to India in 1669, rose to be the governor of Berar and Gujarat, and died in 1710. His eldest son, Mir Qamr-ud-din (later known as Nizam-ul-mulk Asaf Jah), was born in 1671.

In his early youth Mir Qamr-ud-din used to accompany his father in his military expeditions in the Deccan. He distinguished himself in the investment of the fortress of Adoni (1688), and was raised to the rank of 2,000 zat, 500 sawar, by the emperor Aurangzib, who began to show special favour to him on account of his gallantry, efficiency and insight into human affairs. Mir Qamr-ud-din was dignified with the title of Chin Qilich Khan in 1691. In recognition of his services in different expeditions against the Marathas the emperor bestowed on him the saujdari of Bijapur.¹ In 1702 the emperor was pleased to bestow on Chin Qilich Khan the important post of subahdar of Bijapur Karnatak. At the siege of Wakinkhera, the famous Berad stronghold, Chin Qilich Khan's performance attracted the notice of Aurangzib, who presented him with an Arab steed with gold trapping, as his own horse was killed in a charge led against the enemy.² At last the Berads were compelled to yield and take to flight. Chin Qilich Khan and his Turani soldiery, in the words of the court historian, 'chased furiously the crow after it had left the noose and their anxious search sent that broken-winged one into

¹ *Maa'thir-i-'Alamgiri*, 441.

² *Ibid.*, 499.

the wilderness of wandering'.³ In recognition of his services Chin Qilich Khan was raised to the rank of 5,000 zat, 5,000 sawar, and was awarded one crore and fifty lakhs of dams, a jewelled sabre and an elephant.

It seems that Chin Qilich Khan had, after the capture of Wakin-khera, acquired great influence over his imperial master who consulted him on all important matters of the state. Two months before his death Aurangzib summoned Chin Qilich Khan to court for some important consultation. Probably he knew that his end was approaching. He wanted him to espouse the cause of prince Kam Bakhsh, the pet of his old age, for whom he had the strongest affection. The emperor knew that prince Azam had won over to his side Asad Khan, Zulfiqar Khan and other amirs. On 9 February 1707 the emperor, after holding consultations with Chin Qilich Khan, gave leave to Kam Bakhsh to go to Bijapur as subahdar. For quite a long while the emperor had been endeavouring to bring the Turani party of his court, which had Ghazi-ud-din Khan Firuz Jang, Chin Qilich Khan and Muhammad Amin Khan as its natural leaders, to support the claims of Kam Bakhsh as against the pretensions of Azam who enjoyed the backing of the Irani party.

CAREER OF NIZAM-UL-MULK. REIGN OF BAHADUR SHAH

On the death of Aurangzib, at Ahmadnagar, both Chin Qilich Khan and Muhammad Amin Khan, on grounds of prudence, joined Azam in his march towards Aurangabad. Azam sought to conciliate Chin Qilich Khan whom he knew to be the most influential person in the Turani party. So he conferred on him the title of Khan-i-Dauran and the subahdari of Burhanpur, which he felt constrained to accept. But very soon he left Azam, on the pretext of his presence being required somewhere else in the Deccan. He too, like his father Firuz Jang, subahdar of Berar, decided not to take any active part in the imminent war of succession between the sons of Aurangzib.

After Bahadur Shah's victory over Azam in the battle of Jafau the new emperor, on the advice of his chief minister Khan-i-Khanan Munim Khan, appointed Chin Qilich Khan as the subahdar of the province of Avadh and faujdar of Lucknow, and conferred on him the title of Khan-i-Dauran Bahadur. Chin Qilich Khan took charge of the administration of Avadh in December 1707.

But he remained in Avadh only for a few months. When Bahadur Shah returned from the Deccan, after his successful campaign against

³ *Ibid.*, 508.

Kam Bakhsh, Chin Qilich Khan repaired to the court. He felt disgusted at the absolute authority assumed by Zulfiqar Khan in the affairs of the state after the death of Munim Khan, the chief minister, in 1710. He resigned from the subahdari of Avadh and also relinquished the title bestowed by the new emperor. He made up his mind to retire into private life. For nearly five years Chin Qilich Khan lived in seclusion.⁴

The period under review corresponds with the supremacy acquired by Zulfiqar Khan in the counsels of the state. He held the important posts of Mir Bakshi of the empire and the subahdar of the Deccan. He was allowed to leave Daud Khan Panni as his deputy in the south. It was chiefly by his advice and suggestion that practically all the Turani high officials, whom he regarded as his potential rivals, were removed from the Deccan and dispersed to different and distant parts of the country, so that they might not stand in the way of his ambition. In order to consolidate his position in the Deccan, Zulfiqar Khan effected an accommodation with the Marathas by granting Shahu the right of chauth and sardeshmukhi; but collection and payment continued to be entrusted to imperial agents as before. This arrangement had no imperial sanction; so its legal validity was questionable.

NIZAM-UL-MULK AS THE DECCAN VICEROY

Zulfiqar Khan's power did not survive the fall of Jahandar Shah; indeed, both of them were put to death when Farukh-siyar became victorious. After the latter's accession Chin Qilich Khan was honoured with the title of Nizam-ul-mulk and appointed viceroy of the six subahs of the Deccan⁵ and faujdar of Karnatak (1713). It was on the advice of the new chief minister, Sayyid Abdullah Khan, entitled Qutb-ul-mulk, that the emperor appointed Nizam-ul-mulk to the viceroyalty of the Deccan. His presence in the capital was considered to be dangerous for the consolidation of the Savvid brothers' influence. Moreover, the confusion and disorder in the Deccan required the presence of a strong and capable officer who could check the encroachments of the Marathas in that part of the empire.

4 *Ibid.*, 839. *Tārikh-i-Fathiyah*

5 In the time of Aurangzib the Deccan was divided into six subahs—(1) Khandesh, (2) Berar, (3) Aurangabad, (4) Bidar, (5) Hyderabad, (6) Bijapur. During the later years of his reign, when the imperial armies had conquered practically the whole of South India, Hyderabad and Bijapur were made into Karnatak Hyderabad Balaghat and Karnatak Hyderabad Painghat. (Wilks, *Historical Sketches of Southern India*, I 184-86.)

On his arrival in the Deccan in 1713 Nizam-ul-mulk found affairs in the greatest disorganization as a result of the excesses committed by the Maratha agents in exercise of their rights of chauth and sardeshmukhi with impunity. No sooner did he arrive at Aurangabad than he started reorganizing the administrative machinery of the six subahs of the Deccan. The Marathas had appointed their kamaishdars (revenue-collectors) to collect the chauth. These local officers exacted payments from merchants and travellers who desired security from plunder, and imposed tolls upon every cart and bullock passing through the territory. The kamaishdars could get military support from the Maratha sardars who had established a sort of parallel government in the Deccan, dividing the Mughal territory among themselves. If there happened to be any difficulty in obtaining their chauth they openly defied the imperial authority, too weak to oppose their exactions.

The first thing that Nizam-ul-mulk did was to consolidate his position at Aurangabad and to suppress the authority of the local Maratha collectors of chauth and sardeshmukhi. He repudiated the obligations created by the agreement entered into by Zulfiqar Khan and the Maratha king Shahu, alleging its observance to be inconsistent with the authority vested in the viceroy of the Deccan.⁶ With his usual foresight and dexterity he availed himself of the dissensions prevailing among the Maratha chiefs. He took full advantage of the feud existing between the Kolhapur party, which owed allegiance to Tara Bai, and that of Shahu. Chandrasen Jadhav, son of Dhanaji Jadhav, deserted Shahu and joined Nizam-ul-mulk. He took shelter at Aurangabad along with Rambhaji Nimbalkar and Sharja Rao Ghatge who also had deserted Shahu and joined his standard. The latter was given a jagir by Shambhaji of Kolhapur, on the recommendation of Nizam-ul-mulk, which continued to be enjoyed by his family and was known as Kagal state. Nizam-ul-mulk gave protection to Chandrasen Jadhav and bestowed on him a large fief with a revenue of 25 lakhs a year for the upkeep of his troops. He was required to keep 15,000 well-equipped men, ready for action at any moment. His fief was scattered over parts of Bhalki, Bahmanabad, Ilandu and Chandragarh, where he had built a fortress on an adjoining hill.⁷ He was treated like other nobles and his advice was sought on all important matters concerning the Marathas.

Nizam-ul-mulk started his work of reform in the devastated regions of the Deccan in order to secure peace and plenty to the

⁶ Khafi Khan, II, 743.

⁷ Ma'āthir'-ul-umrā, II, 337. Lachmi Narain Shafiq, Blātrul-Ghānātm.

peasantry whose lands were lying waste on account of the Maratha inroads. He assured them that they would not be deprived of the fruits of their labour. He stationed troops at vantage points to keep off the armed bands of Maratha free-booters. Then he had to deal courageously, yet skilfully, with Balaji Vishwanath, who had, after the withdrawal of Chandrasen Jadhav, risen in the favour of Shahu. When Balaji came to know of the designs of Nizam-ul-mulk, he raised a fresh force in order to remove all obstacles in the way of Maratha unity.

Meanwhile Nizam-ul-mulk had sent troops in the direction of the Godavari to compel Shahu's officers, who were ravaging the countryside, to withdraw. An encounter took place in which the Marathas were forced to retire to the bank of the Bhima. On hearing the news of this reverse Shahu directed Balaji Vishwanath to proceed against Nizam-ul-mulk. He marched at the head of a large army in order to re-establish Maratha authority in the regions whence it had been ousted. A battle was fought in the vicinity of Purandhar in which Balaji suffered a severe defeat. He had to retire and seek refuge in the Ghats. A Mughal contingent under the command of Rambhaji Nimbalkar occupied the evacuated territory in the neighbourhood of the Poona district. This territory was given in jagir to Chandrasen Jadhav in recognition of his services. After the termination of hostilities a treaty was signed between Nizam-ul-mulk and Balaji Vishwanath, the exact terms of which are not known; most probably its basis was mutual restoration of captives and prisoners. It was entered into on the conviction that neither party was able to destroy the other.

Daud Khan Panni and his agents used to share in the annoying taxes and exactions that the Maratha chiefs levied from the helpless peasantry and merchants. Nizam-ul-mulk, on the contrary, established a uniform system of assessment in the subah of Aurangabad where he first introduced his revenue reforms and which he intended to extend to other provinces of the Deccan, under the watchful and efficient control of Sheikh Muhammad Azam and later of diwan Khem Karan.⁸ He directed them to hold a thorough investigation into the ryots' grievances, in the course of which he was informed that Daud Khan Panni and his subordinate officers used to appropriate for themselves 20 lakhs of rupees annually from the revenue in accordance with their secret arrangement with the agents of Shahu. Informed of this, Nizam-ul-mulk ordered Khem Karan and Muhammad Ghiyas Khan to tour the countryside and organize the

⁸ *Hadiqat-ul-'Alam*, II, 69.

system of assessment to the advantage of the cultivators by freeing them from the Maratha chauth-collectors who oppressed them systematically.

Nizam-ul-mulk showed masterly grasp of the situation and an intimate acquaintance with the problems of the Deccan. By strict economy and care in the management of the finances, as well as by organizing the revenue system, which had become thoroughly corrupt and iniquitous, he restored the prosperity of the Deccan. He abolished the payment of the large sums which Zulfiqar Khan had engaged himself to pay, by way of blackmail, to the Maratha court. But in 1715 he was replaced as subahdar of the Deccan by Amir-ul-umara Husain Ali Khan, the younger of the Sayyid brothers. His untimely recall left his work of reform incomplete, and gave an opportunity to the Marathas to re-assert their claims and strengthen their hold on the Deccan.

NIZAM-UL-MULK AND SAYYID BROTHERS

Farrukh-siyar was anxious to free himself from the control of the Sayyid brothers. He undermined in various ways the authority of the new subhdar of the Deccan, going so far as to address secret letters to the leading landholders to withhold payment of revenue to his officers. In self-defence Sayyid Husain Ali entered into an agreement with Shahu which gave the Maratha king valuable political and military rights and bound him to keep 15,000 horse at the subhdar's disposal. The emperor, however, refused to ratify this agreement. Realising that the Sayyid brothers were contemplating his downfall the emperor tried to win over to his side powerful nobles like Sarbuland Khan. Nizam-ul-mulk was another person who enjoyed the reputation of a stout fighter and who could be helpful in overthrowing the Sayyid brothers. He was summoned from Moradabad (in Uttar Pradesh) where he had been specially appointed after his return from the Deccan to chastise the rebels and to restore peace and security in that part of the country. But he preferred to remain at Moradabad, where he held a large fief, instead of going to the court and sharing the insults offered to the nobility by the proud Sayyids. Being a man of shrewd intellect, it did not take him long to form his own judgment about the state of affairs in the capital. He wisely restrained from committing himself to any definite proposal or opinion.

When Farrukh-siyar found that Nizam-ul-mulk would not help him against the Sayyids, he estranged him by confiscating his estates in the neighbourhood of Moradabad. Qutb-ul-mulk, the elder Sayyid, on his part, tried to win over Nizam-ul-mulk by promising him the

subahdari of Malwa, if he cared to remain neutral in the struggle which he knew was almost impending. Nizam-ul-mulk was extremely dissatisfied with the treatment meted out to him by the emperor. Qutb-ul-mulk profited from the mistakes of the emperor and by his tactful behaviour won over Nizam-ul-mulk to his side.

Then followed the dethronement and death of Farrukh-siyar, the short reigns of Rafi-ud-darjat and Rafi-ud-daulah, and the accession of Muhammad Shah. The Sayyids were all-powerful. Before the accession of Rafi-ud-darjat, Nizam-ul-mulk was offered the subahdari of Patna, which he refused to accept because he expected the prized subahdari of Malwa for his neutrality in the struggle between the Sayyid brothers and Farrukh-siyar. But his presence in the capital after the death of Farrukh-siyar was a source of constant anxiety to the Sayyids, as his influence over the Turani soldiery was considerable. With a view to keeping him away from the capital they appointed him to the subahdari of Malwa and assured him that he would not be recalled on any flimsy pretext.

Nizam-ul-mulk left Delhi on 15 March 1719 with his family and whatever property he could carry with him. Many disbanded soldiers who were looking for employment, as well as many of those who did not desire to live under the thumb of the Sayyids, including more than a thousand mansabdars and jagirdars, accompanied him to Malwa. Causes of friction between Nizam-ul-mulk and the Sayyids were not long to come. After reaching Malwa he began organizing his army and collecting artillery and munitions of war in order to be able to defend his province against the Marathas if they chose to turn in that direction. The official news-reporters of Malwa, evidently the creatures of the Sayyids, started sending alarming reports to the capital about the intentions of Nizam-ul-mulk. It was reported that he was levying fresh troops and collecting artillery far in excess of his requirements. But, as the Amir-ul-umara Sayyid Husain Ali had his hands full with the affair of Girdhar Bahadur at Allahabad, he waited for more favourable conditions in north India before dealing with Nizam-ul-mulk.

The Amir-ul-umara directed Dilawar Ali Khan, his bakhshi, who was in Rajputana at that time, to march to Malwa and serve on Nizam-ul-mulk the farman of recall, ordering him to evacuate the territory. The latter knew that safety lay in quick action: there was no time to lose. He, therefore, embarked upon the design of recovering the Deccan from the Marathas, which he had formed at the time of his supersession by Sayyid Husain Ali Khan. There was no alternative open to him now except that of proceeding to the Deccan. He was well acquainted with the country and its resources;

he having spent his youth in bringing it under the suzerainty of the Mughal emperor. He decided to cross the Narmada and try his luck there. This resolve was also prompted by the fact that Rani Rajasbai of Kolhapur, Chandrasen Jadhav and Mubariz Khan, nazim of Hyderabad, had eagerly implored his aid, promising him their whole-hearted co-operation to oust the agents of the Sayyid brothers from the Deccan. Mubariz Khan, being dissatisfied with the methods and policy of Alam Ali Khan, the deputy of the Amir-ul-umara, sent one of his confidants, Muhammad Ali, to Malwa to persuade Nizam-ul-mulk to march towards the Deccan.⁹

Muhammad Qasim Aurangabadi, author of *Aḥvāl-ul-Khawaqīn*, a contemporary writer, relates that while consulting his most trusted officer Muhammad Ghiyas Khan about his future course of action Nizam-ul-mulk made the following observation characteristic of him: "That I have done no wrong is plain, nor need I feel ashamed. I have lived respected from the days of the late emperor Aurangzib until now, and for the few more days that may be vouchsafed me; I trust I may be saved from dishonour. Why do these upstarts try to harm me, merely because they are puffed up by their sudden elevation? ... I swear by the God that made me, that they may bring all Hindustan against me and I will still resist undaunted. If longer life has been decreed me, no harm will arrive, if the hour of departure is at hand, nothing can avail me."¹⁰

NIZAM-UL-MULK'S MASTERY OVER THE DECCAN

In spite of heavy rains Nizam-ul-mulk resolved to cross the Narmada. He set out for Ujjain, pretending to proceed towards the north, made three marches in the direction of Agra and then abruptly turned southward. After fording the Narmada at Akbarpur at the head of 6,000 horse¹¹ he was joined by Rustam Beg Khan, faujdar of Kahargaon, and Fatch Singh, zamindar of Mankrai.

Nizam-ul-mulk first turned his attention towards Asirgarh which was considered to be one of the most important strongholds in the region, commanding as it did the highroad between the Deccan and north India and had, by its impregnable position, defied the arms of no less a man than Akbar the Great, who was compelled to have resort to gold when the sword had failed him. Nizam-ul-mulk sent one of his men, named Khusrau, in advance towards Asirgarh in order to negotiate and come to terms with Usman Khan Qadri,

9 Muhammad Absan Ijad, *Futūhat-i-Āṣafi*.

10 Irvine, *Latter Mughals*, II, 21.

11 Khafi Khan, II, 880. According to *Tārīkh-i-Muzaffari*, the number of cavalry was 14,000 and according to *Siyār* 12,000.

qiladar of the fortress, and others. He offered, on behalf of Nizam-ul-mulk, to pay the garrison two years' arrears of pay which were withheld by Anwarullah Khan, nazim of Burhanpur, besides other rich rewards. As agreed upon, Nizam-ul-mulk obtained the keys of the fortress on 20 May 1720, and entered it at the appointed time with his forces.¹²

At Burhanpur Nizam-ul-mulk was joined by a contingent sent by Shambaji of Kolhapur which included several Maratha leaders of note. Rajashai, Shambaji's mother, had invoked the help of Nizam-ul-mulk when the latter was in Malwa; she also offered her support if he cared to come to the Deccan.¹³

Meanwhile Dilawar Ali Khan was receiving pressing letters from the Amir-ul-umara, asking him to keep in touch with the movements of Alam Ali Khan in order to overwhelm the forces of Nizam-ul-mulk by concerted attacks from two directions. But Nizam-ul-mulk was far too clever a general to let the two armies unite against him and thus expose himself to their joint action. He manoeuvred to deal with them separately, one by one. In June 1720 he encountered Dilawar Ali Khan at a distance of about 30 miles north of Burhanpur, and utterly defeated him. Dilawar Ali Khan was struck by a musket-ball and killed. Nizam-ul-mulk took full advantage of Dilawar Ali Khan's headlong impetuosity, and by his cool-headed tactics he managed to secure complete victory over his formidable foe.¹⁴ In August 1720 Alam Ali Khan was similarly dealt with.¹⁵ His defeat and death, in the battle of Balapur, established the undisputed supremacy of Nizam-ul-mulk in the whole of the Mughal Deccan.

When apprised of the news of the defeat and death of Dilawar Ali Khan, the Sayyids felt apprehensive of the position of Alam Ali Khan in the Deccan. After long deliberations it was decided that Sayyid Husain Ali Khan should proceed to the Deccan at the head of a large army and take the emperor also along with him in order to give an appearance of legitimacy to his cause. Muhammad Amin Khan (Itimad-ul-daulah), at the head of his Turani soldiery, also accompanied this expedition. On the way to the Deccan Sayyid Husain Ali Khan was murdered. The emperor appointed Muhammad Amin Khan, a cousin of Nizam-ul-mulk, his chief minister and then along with him marched back to Delhi. Qutb-ul-mulk was taken prisoner and put in confinement. Later, he was given poison at the

12 Munim Khan, *Sauvinh-i-Deccan*, Khafi Khan, II, 885.

13 *Furūhāt-i-Asafi*.

14 *Tārikh-i-Muzaffari*, *Tārikh-i-Hindī*, Khafi Khan, II, 880.

15 Ghazansfar Husain, *Jangnāma* (ed. Abdul Haq).

instigation of the emperor. Thus Muhammad Shah obtained freedom from the galling tutelage of the Sayyid brothers and took the reins of government in his own hands.

NIZAM-UL-MULK AS IMPERIAL WAZIR

Nizam-ul-mulk, after his victories over Dilawar Ali Khan and Alam Khan, had proceeded straight to Aurangabad where he was apprised of the fresh developments in the politics of the central government. At Aurangabad he set about organizing the different departments of administration. He was busy restoring peace and order and chastising rebels, when he received the news of Muhammad Amin Khan's death as also an imperial farman, asking him to repair to the capital immediately in order to undertake the onerous duties of the chief minister. After appointing Izd-ud-daulah Iwaz Khan as his deputy and entrusting him with his personal seal of authority, Nizam-ul-mulk set out upon his march to Delhi, where he reached in January 1722.

In his new position, Nizam-ul-mulk found himself confronted by a solid bloc of opponents who took delight in putting obstacles in his way and creating difficulties for him. His attempt to reform the administration of the central government exposed him to the displeasure of the emperor and his favourites who constantly intrigued against him. Realizing that the emperor and his courtiers were beyond reform, Nizam-ul-mulk in sheer disgust decided to leave the court. After nearly two years' stay there he started for the Deccan and reached Aurangabad in July 1724.¹⁶ The emperor had sent orders to Mubariz Khan, the saujdar of Chicacole, to dispossess Nizam-ul-mulk and assume the subahdari of the Deccan in his stead. Mubariz Khan collected a large army, secured Maratha aid and attacked Nizam-ul-mulk at the village of Shakar-Kheda in Berar, about 80 miles from Aurangabad. But Mubariz Khan lost his life after sustaining a signal defeat (October 1724).¹⁷ The author of the *Ma'athir-ul-umarā* attributes his disaster to carelessness and want of promptitude. However, this was one of the decisive battles of India, for it decided the future of the Deccan and laid the foundation of the *de facto* sovereign state of Hyderabad. This battle established the virtual independence of Nizam-ul-mulk and his dynasty from the effete central authority at Delhi.

When the report of the failure of his designs and the complete victory of Nizam-ul-mulk reached Muhammad Shah, the latter pre-

¹⁶ Khafi Khan, II, 950

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 954-58.

tended as if nothing had happened, restored to the victor his property in north India, and allowed him to stay in the Deccan as long as he liked and repair to the court whenever it suited his convenience. Nizam-ul-mulk, on his part wrote a long letter to the emperor defending his conduct and expressing his sentiments of obedience and loyalty.¹⁸ The emperor was pleased to confer on him the title of Asaf Jah in order to conciliate him.¹⁹

NIZAM-UL-MULK AS INDEPENDENT RULER

For the next 24 years Nizam-ul-mulk ruled over the Deccan provinces without any rival to challenge his authority. He never openly declared severance of the Deccan from the central government. In practice, however, he carried on the government of the six subahs without any reference to Delhi, unhampered in the exercise of all the sovereign attributes of a state. He conducted wars, concluded treaties, and conferred titles without asking permission from the imperial government. But his loyalty to the emperor remained unshaken. He did not use the scarlet umbrella. Coins continued to be struck, and the khutbah to be read, in the name of the emperor. Even in his testament he advised his successor to maintain the traditional relations of loyalty with the imperial government.

Nizam-ul-mulk brought with him from Delhi a number of Muslim and Hindu followers, who were attached to his person and had given good account of themselves in his troubles. He granted them jagirs as rewards for their loyal services and to meet the expenses of their contingents. In course of time these jagirs, whether granted for civil or military purposes, came to be considered as hereditary. The six subahs of the Deccan became one administrative unit, divided into three distinct portions, consisting, firstly, of jagirs, secondly, of sarf-i-khas, i.e. territory reserved for the ruler's privy purse; and thirdly, of diwani or government lands, the revenues of which were earmarked for the expenses of administration. Most of these diwani districts were farmed out to persons who were allowed to retain 12 to 25 per cent of the revenues for administrative charges, paving the balance to the state treasury. The revenues of the Hyderabad state in Nizam-ul-mulk's time amounted to about 19 crores of rupees²⁰

NIZAM-UL-MULK AND THE MARATHAS

In view of the sanads obtained from the central government the Marathas claimed the rights of chauth and sardeshmukhi on the

¹⁸ *Annals & Morn. Rec.* (1785), I, 482-83. Irvine, II, 153-54.

¹⁹ *Mā'athir-ul-umard*, III, 844.

²⁰ See *Dabba Dabir Sūbhār-i-Dakhian*, 418.

revenues of the Hyderabad state. But there was a rift in the Maratha camp. Both Shahu and Shambhaji of Kolhapur professed to be the rightful claimant in this regard. Nizam-ul-mulk refused to pay the contribution to either of them in order not to prejudice any one's claims. As the viceroy of the Deccan he proposed that both parties should submit their claims to his arbitration in order to settle once for all to whom belonged the right of collecting chauth and sardesh-mukhi in the six subahs of the Deccan granted by the imperial patents. Shahu was half willing, and the pratinidhi had no objection to the assumption of the constitutional right by the viceroy of the Deccan to decide disputes arising between the different landholders of the region. But the peshwa, Baji Rao, shrewdly guessed the underlying motive of this arrangement. He succeeded in convincing Shahu of the threatening nature of Nizam-ul-mulk's proposals, which cut at the very root of Maratha authority. The pratinidhi opened secret correspondence with Nizam-ul-mulk who offered him a jagir in Berar. This further inflamed the fire of jealousy between the pratinidhi and Baji Rao, and gave Nizam-ul-mulk an opportunity to foment dissension in the Maratha court.

In 1725 Nizam-ul-mulk directed Iwaz Khan to proceed towards Karnatak and clear the country of Maratha agents. This officer ousted the Maratha tax-collectors in a very short time and appointed his own men in that part of the country. He also seized the town of Trichinopoly from Sarphoji, son of Sivaji's brother Vyankoji. Sarphoji appealed to Shahu to come to his rescue. Shahu was advised by Fateh Singh Bhonsle to send an expedition to Karnatak to re-establish the right of tribute and realize the arrears. He persuaded Shahu to realize that both Maratha honour and interest required the capture of Trichinopoly. Fateh Singh Bhonsle was directed to march towards Karnatak at the head of 50,000 troops. He had a special interest in, and was familiar with, the country and its people. He held the jagir of Akalkot on the borders of Karnatak. Baji Rao also accompanied him. The Marathas, however, suffered severe reverses and were obliged to retreat.

The failure of the first expedition did not discourage the Marathas. Under the leadership of Fateh Singh Bhonsle a second expedition was sent to Karnatak in 1726-27. This also proved a complete failure in spite of the help of Tulaji, the chief of Tanjore. By this time Shahu had realized the mistake of trying conclusions with Nizam-ul-mulk, who was not prepared to surrender an inch of his territory or allow the Marathas to exact tribute from the peasantry of Karnatak.

Meanwhile Nizam-ul-mulk continued to be on close terms with

Shambhaji of Kolhapur, promising him imperial sanction for his titles.²¹ Chandrasen Jadhav conducted the negotiations between them in order to organize a common front against Baji Rao. Shambhaji joined Nizam-ul-mulk in September 1726, leaving his government in the hands of his mother, Rajasbai. Baji Rao, on his part, exerted his best to persuade Shahu that a campaign against Nizam-ul-mulk should be undertaken at the earliest possible moment, as delay would further strengthen the cause of the enemy. He had long regarded war with Nizam-ul-mulk as an inevitable issue for which it behoved the Maratha state to be prepared. On the whole the policy of adventure had so far been justified by its results. In spite of the opposition from the pratnidhi Baji Rao obtained permission from Shahu to organize a surprise attack on Nizam-ul-mulk's territory. He was given full powers to conduct the operations. In August 1727 Baji Rao led his army towards the Aurangabad district.

Thus began an important campaign in which Baji Rao's strategy was to avoid pitched battles (for Nizam-ul-mulk had an efficient train of artillery) and to weaken his adversary by laying waste his territory. Pursued by Nizam-ul-mulk's forces, he marched in the direction of Gujarat. On hearing that Nizam-ul-mulk intended to attack Poona the peshwa turned back and crossed the Godavari. Nizam-ul-mulk also forded the river and encamped at Mungi Sheogaon in the hilly and barren region of Palkhed. The depredations of the Marathas caused a severe scarcity of grain and fodder. Nizam-ul-mulk had to conclude an agreement with Baji Rao at Mungi Sheogaon on 8 March 1728 recognizing Shahu as the king of the Marathas as also his right to chauth and sardeshmukhi in the six subahs of the Deccan. He further agreed to pay the arrears and to reinstate the Maratha revenue-collectors whom he had turned out.²² This treaty is a landmark in the history of the Deccan. It shows that even a man like Nizam-ul-mulk was obliged by the force of circumstances to accept the claims of the Marathas, although in later years he succeeded in neutralizing the effects of the treaty by his skilful diplomatic manipulations.

Muhammad Khan Bangash had taken over charge of Malwa as subahdar in 1729; but as he failed in his struggle with the Marathas he was replaced by Sawai Jai Singh. After unsuccessful resistance to the Marathas the Rajput raja entered into a secret understanding with Baji Rao, granting him the right to levy chauth and sardeshmukhi. In 1734 the Marathas had established their outposts from

²¹ Gulshan-i-'Ajlub.

²² Hadqat-ul-'Alam, II, 140.

Gwalior to Ajmir, and right up to the country adjoining the province of Agra.²³ Early in 1737 Baji Rao advanced as far as Delhi.

NIZAM-UL-MULK IN IMPERIAL AFFAIRS

At this juncture some of the influential nobles of the imperial court, including Muhammad Khan Bangash and Itimad-ud-daulah, were in favour of inviting Nizam-ul-mulk to take up the reins of imperial administration in his hands and devise means of saving the empire from total dismemberment. The emperor was also convinced that the only person who could frustrate the designs of the Marathas was Nizam-ul-mulk. He summoned the latter to his aid, writing several pressing letters of conciliation in order to show that he had no ill-feeling towards him. On him were conferred the rank of 8,000 zat and 8,000 sawar as also the office of vakil-i-mutlaq (regent plenipotentiary), the highest dignity to which any Mughal noble could aspire. Nizam-ul-mulk resolved to go to Delhi and try to set right the affairs of the empire. He did not hesitate to take up the responsibility of office at this crisis in the affairs of the central government. By accepting the imperial offer he deliberately plunged himself into a whirlpool of troubles.

Before starting for Delhi in April 1737 Nizam-ul-mulk made necessary arrangements for the administration of his dominions in the Deccan. As Baji Rao had got the government of Malwa it was necessary to make special arrangements in Khandesh. Hafiz-ud-din Khan, governor of Khandesh, was replaced by his uncle, Nasir-ud-daulah Salabat Jang, and the former was sent to Delhi as his special agent. Nasir Jang was appointed deputy subahdar of the Deccan during his absence. Orders were issued to all the high officials and the nobility to offer their allegiance to Nasir Jang.²⁴

Nizam-ul-mulk reached Delhi on 12 July 1737. The party of the Amir-ul-imara Samsam-ud-daulah and Sawai Jai Singh, which had for some time been in power at the court, gradually lost its influence and ascendancy in the counsels of the emperor. In August 1737 Nizam-ul-mulk was appointed subahdar of Malwa (superseding Baji Rao) and subahdar of Agra (replacing Sawai Jai Singh).²⁵ After the rainy season Nizam-ul-mulk started from Delhi towards Malwa in order to oust the Maratha agents from that province.

Baji Rao met Nizam-ul-mulk in the neighbourhood of Bhopal at the head of a huge army of 80,000 men. After an indecisive skirmish

²³ *Siyār*, II, 466.

²⁴ *Hadiqat-ul-'Ālam*, II, 145.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

Nizam-ul-mulk found himself compelled to retreat and formed an entrenchment in the city of Bhopal. Avoidance of battle invariably serves the interest of those who carry on their operations according to guerilla tactics. But Nizam-ul-mulk had no other alternative left. He could not depend upon the Rajputs and the Bundelas in the event of a general action. Being superior in number, the Marathas surrounded his camp and cut off his supplies. There was no contact between him and the contingents of Safdar Jang which had been left behind to guard the rear. No help could come from the Deccan, for the peshwa's brother Chimnaji Appa had already taken up post on the Tapti and instigated the governor of Khandesh to be hostile.²⁶ Thus cut off from all possible reinforcements, Nizam-ul-mulk decided to retreat. In fact, by his sagacity he warded off a crushing defeat and turned his weak position to as good an account as was possible in those circumstances. By his timely overtures for peace he avoided complete rout of his heterogeneous army, so deficient in zeal for the imperial cause.

Taking advantage of his position, Baji Rao tried to assault and engage in a general action. But the swivel guns and the artillery of Nizam-ul-mulk repelled his advance, not allowing him even to approach his camp. Baji Rao, in one of his letters addressed to Chimnaji Appa, as an apology to desist from attacking the besieged army of Nizam-ul-mulk, significantly observed, "Appa, you know what kind of an artillery he has."²⁷ Chimnaji Appa had accompanied Baji Rao in the first campaign against Nizam ul mulk and knew something about the fire of the latter's batteries.

Thus both parties welcomed an accommodation instead of testing their strength in battle. On 7 January 1738 a convention was signed at Durai Sarai, 64 miles from Sironj. Nizam-ul-mulk agreed to grant to Baji Rao the whole of Malwa as also sovereign rights over the territory between the Narmada and the Chambal. He also promised to secure confirmation of this arrangement from the emperor and to use his best endeavours to get for the peshwa 50 lakhs of rupees from the central treasury as reparation. In view of Nizam-ul-mulk's usual unwillingness to part with money, this provision for monetary compensation was a concession which Baji Rao 'scarcely expected'.²⁸ According to some historians the rumours of Nadir Shah's impending invasion had already for some time been current in the capital. The emperor wrote pressing letters to Nizam-ul-mulk requiring him to

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 147.

²⁷ Grant Duff, II, 448.

²⁸ Baji Rao's letter quoted in Grant Duff, II, 449.

reach Delhi as soon as possible and asking him to conclude an agreement with the peshwa.²⁹

This was the last time that Nizam-ul-mulk and Baji Rao came into conflict. Emboldened by his success in Malwa the peshwa thought of bringing the Deccan also under his sway. In December 1739 he started his campaign at the head of 50,000 horse and foot. He had a double purpose in view. He wanted to bring pressure to bear upon Nizam-ul-mulk so that the latter might issue him the sanad conferring the government of Malwa duly confirmed by the emperor, and also give effect to other stipulations of the convention of Durai Sarai as part of the agreement. Moreover, he thought of levying tribute in the six subahs of the Deccan to replenish his treasury which was exhausted on account of his campaigns against the Portuguese.

When Nasir Jang received intelligence of the Maratha invasion of his father's dominions, he at once got ready for a counter-attack. He advanced to meet Baji Rao on the banks of the Godavari. His army numbered only 10,000. After crossing the river Nasir Jang attacked Baji Rao, forcing him to a pitched battle which the latter wanted to avoid at all cost. Baji Rao was beaten. Nasir Jang's army pursued him in the direction of Ahmadnagar and forced him to sue for peace. At length it was decided that in future the parties would abstain from plundering each other's territory. Baji Rao promised to give up all claims on the revenues of the Deccan. The sarkars of Khar-gaon and Handha, formerly promised by Nizam-ul-mulk were conferred on Baji Rao as his personal jagir.³⁰

NIZAM-UL-MULK AND INVASION OF NADIR SHAH

At Delhi Nizam-ul-mulk made his best endeavours to avert the calamity of Nadir Shah's invasion. That the invader was secretly urged by him to undertake the expedition to India is a baseless legend which was probably circulated by the party of Samsam-ul-daulah and Sawai Jai Singh to discredit Nizam-ul-mulk in the eyes of the emperor. As a contemporary writer observes, "It seems to me

29 *Siyār*, II, 477. *Māñthr-ul-Kirājī*, II, 178. See also *Tārīkh-i-Muzaffarī*.

30 *Hadāqut-ul-'Ālam*, II, 188. This defeat of Baji Rao has been mentioned in the records of the East India Company in the following words: "Bajerao who has ever had success has lately been defeated by Nasir Jang in a pitched battle... Nasir Jang designs to cut off his whole army if possible... Nasir Jang has gained such a victory that it is not known whether ever his father Chicklasse (Chin Qilich) did the like." (*Records of Fort St George, country Correspondence*, 1740.) But an English letter from Bombay as well as Chinnaji Appa's letter of 8 March 1740 speak of Baji Rao's victory.

to be highly probable that Nadir did not stand in need of such instruments for the execution of his ambitious designs."³¹

At Karnal the Mughal forces were placed, under the directions of Nizam-ul-mulk, all round the emperor's camp in the shape of a ring.³² He was in favour of postponing the battle because he knew that the Persian conqueror was "no ordinary foe, no mere plunderer, but a leader of unshakable resolution, who shaped his course with the sword".³³ Another argument in favour of delay was that the forces of the nawab of Avadh, Saadat Khan, needed rest, worn out as they were by one month's incessant marching.³⁴ Nizam-ul-mulk warned the subahdar of Avadh that his military experience had been limited to fighting with the Indian zamindars over whom it was easy to obtain victory, but it was difficult to resist successfully the attack of a great monarch. This sober advice fell on deaf ears. Saadat Khan's precipitate attack led to his own captivity. The battle resulted in the rout of the Mughal army.

After the disaster Nizam-ul-mulk went to the Persian camp at Nadir Shah's invitation and persuaded him to agree to leave India on receipt of an indemnity of 50 lakhs only. Delhi was to be spared and there was to be no cession of territory. In view of his services to the cause of the empire Nizam-ul-mulk was appointed Mir Bakhshi by the grateful emperor in place of Samsam-ud-daulah who had fallen at Karnal. This office had formerly been promised to Saadat Khan, who—now a prisoner in the Persian camp—was blinded by rage and jealousy. He told Nadir Shah that Nizam-ul-mulk would have agreed to pay much more as the price of peace,³⁵ if the conqueror marched to Delhi he would get 20 crores as also jewels and precious articles beyond estimate. The conqueror summoned Nizam-ul-mulk to his camp, placed him in custody, and demanded 20 crores of rupees. He replied, "From the foundation of the Chaghtai dynasty up to now, 20 krors of rupees had never been amassed in the imperial treasury... At present even 50 lakhs are not left in the treasury."³⁶

Nadir Shah then went to Delhi, with the emperor Muhammad Shah as his captive, seized the fabulous wealth of the Mughal capital, and returned to his own country. Before his departure he asked Nizam-ul-mulk to undertake the responsibility of the government of

³¹ Hanway, *The Revolutions of Persia*, II, 142.

³² *Tārikh-i-Nādir Shāhī*.

³³ Anandram, *Thzkrā* (Elliot and Dowson, VIII, 78).

³⁴ Sydūr, II, 343.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 484. *Tārikh-i-Muzaffari*.

³⁶ Irvine, II, 357.

the Mughal empire and said: "You deserve the empire and not Muhamanud Shah. I want to make you the emperor of India and leave with you ten thousand of my intrepid soldiers who will peel off the skin of those who refuse to acknowledge you." To this tempting offer Nizam-ul-mulk replied: "To be an emperor such qualities of greatness are required as I, your humble servant, do not possess." Nadir Shah asked: "What do you mean by this?" Nizam-ul-mulk said: "I and my ancestors have, from ancient times, been in the service of the rulers of Delhi. Such an impropriety of conduct on my part will make me notorious as one untrue to salt." Nadir Shah appreciated the significance of these remarks and praised Nizam-ul-mulk's loyalty and devotion.³⁷

NASIR JANG'S REBELLION

Soon after Nadir's departure Nizam-ul-mulk began to receive reports from his uncle Nasir-ud-daulah Salabat Jang, subahdar of Burhanpur, that Nasir Jang, whom he had appointed deputy viceroy of the Deccan, meditated rebellion. He had committed some presumptuous acts. His behaviour towards the highest nobility caused discontent and threatened tranquillity in the Deccan. Nizam-ul-mulk realized that it was a mistake to have placed extensive authority in his hands. The state of affairs required his immediate presence in the Deccan in order not to allow the stability of his government to be endangered then. He obtained permission from the emperor to leave for his dominions to suppress the rebellion of his son.

Apprised of his father's arrival, Nasir Jang sent him a message to go back to Delhi and leave the government of the Deccan to him. Weary of waiting for the succession, he conceived the scheme of achieving his object by undutiful revolt against his father. Nizam-ul-mulk opened negotiations with Nasir Jang in order to induce him to make submission without bloodshed. He was offered the subahdari of Bijapur and the continuance of all the rights and privileges which he had been enjoying. But he was not prepared to listen to his father's advice and decided to take up arms against him at the instigation of his counsellors. Nizam-ul-mulk felt constrained to draw up his forces in battle array to meet his son's attack. Nasir Jang was defeated and taken captive. Later he was pardoned and reinstated in his former office and titles.³⁸

37 *Māthīr-i-Nizāmī*. The author, Manṣa Ram, was Nizam-ul-mulk's secretary.

38 *Tārīkh-i-Faḥīyah. Hadīqat-ul-'Ālam*, II, 171.

KARNATAK AFFAIRS

The affairs of Karnatak kept Nizam-ul-mulk engaged in the early forties. After the suppression of Nasir Jang's rebellion he marched into Karnatak at the head of 80,000 horse and 200,000 foot. There "every commander of a district had assumed the title of Nabob"; on a single day he saw no less than 18 nawabs!³⁹ After securing their submission he proceeded to Trichinopoly which the Maratha chief Murari Rao Ghorpade of Gooty had seized from Chanda Sahib, son-in-law of Dost Ali, the deceased nawab of Karnatak, in 1741. Nizam-ul-mulk occupied the fort after a long siege (August 1743). He stayed in Karnatak till March 1744. The governorship of the province was conferred upon Anwar-ud-din Khan.

RELATIONS WITH EUROPEAN TRADING NATIONS

In Karnatak the English and the French vied with each other to gain Nizam-ul-mulk's favour in order to advance their commercial and political interests. As rumours of France and England becoming involved in the War of Austrian Succession reached their settlements in India the English and French Companies tried to enlist the support of the powerful viceroy of the Deccan. When war actually began in India (1744) their solicitude for Nizam-ul-mulk's support naturally became more earnest. He himself had a very pronounced pro-French tendency,⁴⁰ but Nasir Jang was inclined to favour the English. Even so, on receipt of an application from the English in March 1747 Nizam-ul-mulk directed Anwar-ud-din to 'protect, aid and assist' them and to use his 'best endeavours in such a manner, that the French may be severely chastised and rooted off'.⁴¹

Nizam-ul-mulk's general policy was to remain on good terms with the European trading nations having their settlements on the Coromandel coast. He aimed at preventing the Marathas from seeking an alliance with them against him. He purposely declined, on grounds of prudence, to take sides in their struggle for commercial and political ascendancy. He had the sagacity to perceive that it was dangerous to get involved in the politics of those foreign merchants who, he suspected, intended to take full advantage by interfering in

³⁹ Orme, I, 51. Wilks, I, 158.

⁴⁰ In 1734 he issued a farman in favour of the French Company granting a terrain at Masulipatam and permitting the circulation of the Pondicherry pagodas (*Letters et Convention 1666-1793*, I). But he prohibited the English Company from coining the Arcot rupees (*Diary and Consultation Book*, 1743).

⁴¹ Mill, *History of India*, III, 73-74.

the affairs of the Indian rulers. What he avoided, his descendants invited. They, like other rulers of the country, were impelled by the blind force of destiny to eagerly seek European aid in their internecine struggles and thus give an opportunity to the English to establish their empire in India.

NIZAM-UL-MULK'S CHARACTER

Nizam-ul-mulk passed away in 1748 at the age of 78. Brought up in his early years in the traditions of Aurangzib, he lived a simple, hard and restless life. Like his great imperial master, he had a distinct political aim as also the will and capacity to achieve it. His love of power was supported by fearlessness, tempered with prudence. He was as gifted a tactician in diplomacy as in war, and in both he knew how to profit by experience. A born leader of men, a great soldier and a capable administrator, he was the only statesman of his times whose political aims were fulfilled. A devout upholder of Islamic principles, he was tolerant towards other faiths and appointed non-Muslims to high posts of responsibility. He wrote poetry in Persian under the pseudonym of 'Shakir'.

NASIR JANG AND MUZAFFAR JANG

Nizam-ul-mulk left dominions extending all over the Deccan from the river Tapti to the frontiers of Mysore and Karnatak, right up to Trichinopoly. Ananda Ranga Pillai was perfectly right in his shrewd prediction that his death would involve the whole of south India and the Deccan in utter chaos and interminable anarchy.⁴² The news of his passing away quickened into activity all the smouldering intrigues which had been restrained by his tact and skill as a ruler and the prestige of his redoubtable name.

Nizam-ul-mulk's eldest son Ghazi-ud-din Khan Firuz Jang remained at Delhi, probably being more interested in imperial politics than in the subahdari of the Deccan. Nasir Jang, the second son, who had stayed near his father at the time of his death, assumed the title of the subahdar of the Deccan. Appropriating all the treasures of his father, he hastened to have himself recognized by the army as his lawful successor. To give his pretension the colour of right, Nasir Jang announced that his elder brother Ghazi-ud-din had renounced his claim to the subahdari of the Deccan in his favour, and

⁴² *Diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai*, V. 41.

that his four younger brothers (Salabat Jang, Nizam Ali Khan, Basalat Jang and Mughal Ali Khan) were content to live a life of ease and contentment at his court.

Besides his sons Nizam-ul-mulk also left a grandson, Hidayat Muhi-ud-din Khan, born of his favourite daughter Khair-un-nisa Begam, who was married to Muhammad Mutawassil Khan, grandson of Sadullah Khan, the great minister of the emperor Shah Jahan. On Nizam-ul-mulk's recommendation Hidayat Muhi-ud-din Khan had received the title of Muzaffar Jang from the emperor,⁴³ and was given the subahdari of Adoni and Raichur. He put forward his claim to the subahdari of the whole of the Deccan in virtue of an alleged farman of the late emperor Muhammad Shah. Although some French writers vouch for the genuineness of this document,⁴⁴ there is hardly any trustworthy contemporary record to support their statement. Safdar Jang, the emperor's wazir, on account of his ill-feeling towards Nasir Jang, encouraged Muzaffar Jang to set up his claim to the subahdari of the Deccan and also sent him private advice in a letter.⁴⁵ The contemporary Marathi records also refer to this matter. Hingne, the Maratha envoy at the imperial court, in his report to the peshwa dated 31 May 1750, observed that he had suggested to Safdar Jang that the cause of Muzaffar Jang should be supported. According to him, the result of this policy would be that the whole of the Deccan would come under the control of the peshwa and the prestige of the wazir would also be enhanced. The wazir agreed to this proposal and asked Hingne to see Muzaffar Jang's relations Hafiz-ud-din Khan and others, in this connection. He also promised to consult the emperor and issue orders in Muzaffar Jang's favour. Hingne suggested that the peshwa might negotiate with Muzaffar Jang in order to make him agree to offer a present of a crore of rupees to the emperor. If that was done the imperial farman would be sent to the peshwa to be despatched to Muzaffar Jang who would thus be a mere puppet and all the real authority would rest in the peshwa's hands.⁴⁶ But owing to the rapid march of events in the Deccan and Karnataka the peshwa's designs to have his nominee as the subahdar of the Deccan could not be realized.

To counteract Muzaffar Jang's pretensions Nasir Jang, on his part, sent with all despatch an emissary to the emperor Ahmad Shah at

⁴³ *Tarikh-i-Zafri*, 113. *Diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai*, VII, 79.

⁴⁴ Martineau, *Dupleix et l'Inde Francaise*, II, 83.

⁴⁵ Letter de Baurat et Delarche à Dupleix, 22 April 1750, quoted by J. Dubreuil, *Diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai*, VII, 79.

⁴⁶ SPD, XXV, 79.

Delhi in order to obtain confirmation of his succession to the subahdar of the Deccan. As the prestige of the emperor's name still carried great weight and influence his countenance and support were sought by rival claimants to power and authority, although no one cared to pay the least obedience to any imperial farman which went against his interests. Moreover, the name of the emperor was often invoked by rival claimants to satisfy the people who still retained a certain degree of reverence for him as also to give a moral and legal foundation to their own claims and pretensions.

When Nasir Jang had settled down at Aurangabad, he made new appointments to important posts in order to facilitate the working of his government. He conferred titles on those who were deemed worthy of favour and confidence. Mir Abdul Razzaq was given the title of Shah Nawaz Khan, and was offered the responsible post of the diwan of the state which he reluctantly accepted as he did not want to be substituted for Puran Chand who was an old friend of his.⁴⁷ At Shah Nawaz Khan's suggestion Puran Chand accepted the diwani of Hyderabad.

While Nasir Jang was busy making administrative arrangements, Muzaffar Jang had started raising large forces near Adoni, ostensibly for putting down the rebellious local Poligars, but in reality to complete his preparations to defy his uncle's authority. At first Nasir Jang tried to win over his nephew. He sent him a conciliatory message through a special envoy asking him to visit Aurangabad.⁴⁸ But Muzaffar Jang was neither inclined to show compliance nor give up his pretensions without a struggle. Arrogant and proud, he refused to take any notice of Nasir Jang's message and openly declared himself the rightful subahdar of the Deccan. He appointed Chanda Sahib as his diwan early in 1749, after the latter's release from Satara, and bestowed on him the title of Khuda Nawaz Khan Bahadur.⁴⁹ Chanda Sahib persuaded Muzaffar Jang to conquer Karnatak first and make it a base of his operations against Nasir Jang. He convinced Muzaffar Jang that it was no use wasting time and effort in the Deccan where his uncle's authority could not be easily challenged. But if he succeeded in establishing his own nominee as the nawab of Arcot, he would acquire additional strength and material resources for the

⁴⁷ *Tārikh-i-Rāhat Afzā*. See also *Hadiqat-ul-'Ālam*, I, 189; *Tuzuk-i-Āsafid*, 52.

⁴⁸ *Tuzuk-i-Āsafid*, 52.

⁴⁹ *Tārikh-i-Zafra*, 114. Chanda Sahib, son-in-law of Dost Ali, nawab of Karnatak, was carried a prisoner to Satara in 1741 by the Marathas after their capture of the fort of Trichinopoly.

more arduous enterprise of winning the subahdari of the Deccan. Moreover, his success would also bring him in close association with the French, a prospect full of future possibilities. Thus a close link was established between disputed successions at Hyderabad and Arcot, and the door was opened for the Anglo-French intervention in south Indian political struggles.

STRUGGLE FOR KARNATAK

It was finally decided to embark on the plan of seizing Karnatak with the help of the French. Events seemed at first to favour Chanda Sahib's policy. Before starting for Karnatak Muzaffar Jang granted a sanad to Chanda Sahib recognizing him as nawab of Arcot, Gingee, Tanjore, Trichinopoly and Madura with their territories and forts. Before undertaking the Karnatak expedition Chanda Sahib, who was already in correspondence with Dupleix, sent an embassy to Pondicherry towards the end of February 1749 and entered into an agreement with him to the effect that Muzaffar Jang would take into his pay a body of 2,000 French soldiers and grant the French the district of Villiyanallur (which the French governor had long coveted)⁵⁰ as jagir.

Muzaffar Jang and Chanda Sahib at the head of 14,000 horse and 15,000 foot embarked upon their invasion of Karnatak in the third week of June 1749. The news of their approach created great confusion and tumult at Arcot. Most of the wealthy merchants moved to Vellore and elsewhere. In the words of the French agent at Arcot, "for these three days there has been so much confusion that not a man would stop to pick up a fallen child. It is indescribable. I do not know what else will happen."⁵¹

Anwar-ud-din Khan, the ruling nawab of Karnatak, set out from Arcot on 3 July 1749. Camping at Ranipet he wrote a conciliatory letter to Muzaffar Jang professing obedience to him and offering to send 5 lakhs of rupees. But there was no prospect of peace. The nawab decided to encamp at Ambur, which was considered to be a spacious place for the camping of a vast army and which also commanded one of the principal passes leading into Karnatak. There was further advantage in taking up position there: the fortress was at the back of the country from where supplies could easily be despatched. Added to this, it was defended on one flank by a mountain

⁵⁰ *Diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai*, IV, 72.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 111.

and on the other by a large lake. The intervening ground had been fortified by entrenchments. Strategically Ambur barred the way to Pondicherry. But the nawab had one weak point. According to the *Tuzuk-i-Walājāhi*, most of the qiladars and zamindars whom Anwar-ud-din Khan had asked to assemble in the plain of Arcot did not respond to his appeal; they were secretly hostile to him.

As Anwar-ud-din had already got an inkling of the possibility of his adversaries getting assistance from the French, he sought help from the English to make up his deficiency in artillery; but the latter, not being ready with their army, excused themselves. Then he requested Dupleix not to help Muzaffar Jang and Chanda Sahib in the coming struggle. He also offered Dupleix the same concession which Chanda Sahib was prepared to offer.⁵² But Dupleix had been much too offended by Anwar-ud-din's policy on the occasion of the French operations round Fort St David and later during the English siege of Pondicherry. Although apparently inclined more and more towards accommodation with the nawab, secretly he had schemed for the release of Chanda Sahib from Maratha captivity and the deposition of Anwar-ud-din Khan and his two sons from the masnad of Karnatak. Despite such uncongenial political climate at Pondicherry Anwar-ud-din again offered to send money to Dupleix for troops or make a grant of villages, and proposed to come in person and discuss the matter if desired, but it was too late.⁵³ Dupleix was determined to support his rival and had already entered into a definite agreement with him. This suited (he thought) his purpose of seizing ultimately the reins of power in Karnatak.

Chanda Sahib's messenger Qutb-ud-din Ali Khan came to Pondicherry on 9 July 1749. He was sent in advance to get all things ready. He informed Dupleix that Muzaffar Jang would arrange correspondence between him and the Mughal emperor, a promise which must have appealed a great deal to the ambitious Frenchman's imagination. Three days later Baza Sahib, son of Chanda Sahib, in accordance with the message Qutb-ud-din Ali Khan had brought from his father, entered into an agreement with Dupleix for payment of the French forces which would be despatched to help Muzaffar Jang.

After obtaining sanction of the Superior Council of Pondicherry to take all measures, military and diplomatic, to advance the cause of Chanda Sahib, Dupleix ordered d'Auteuil at the head of 420 French

⁵² *Mémoire de la Compagnie contre Dupleix*, 40.

⁵³ *Diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai*, VI, 145.

soldiers, 2000 sepoys and 100 topasses (soldiers of Eurasian descent) and a train of artillery to accompany Raza Sahib to join his father. They started on 15 July 1749, covered the distance of 90 miles between Pondicherry and Arcot in six days, and reached Arcot on 21 July. Nawab Anwar-ud-din, who was counting complacently on fighting Muzaffar Jang and Chanda Sahib before they received French aid, tried to check their march at Tiruvaunamalur.⁵⁴ But Muzaffar Jang and Chanda Sahib bypassing him proceeded in the northern direction towards Pallikonda, half-way between Ambur and Vellore, where d'Auteuil and Raza Sahib joined him on 28 July.

On the morning of 3 August the allied armies came in sight of Anwar-ud-din's position at Ambur. Although Muzaffar Jang was the nominal commander-in-chief, d'Auteuil was allowed to take all initiative for conducting the operations. In the engagement which followed Anwar-ud-din was killed and his eldest son Mahfuz Khan, who commanded the vanguard, was taken prisoner. His second son, Muhammad Ali Khan, managed to make good his escape and fled in the direction of Trichinopoly of which he had been governor under his father and where the latter had sent his family and treasures for security.

The battle of Ambur is certainly one of the most important and decisive engagements fought in the modern period of Indian history. Its military importance is probably not so great as its political significance. This battle is remarkable as being the first important occasion when European troops played a conspicuous part in Indian warfare. It is memorable also for the effect it had on the subsequent course of events. To a great extent its result determined the complexion of Dupleix's political course which he later pursued so boldly and ruthlessly and which was so successfully followed by the English. It was this policy which later on involved the European trading nations in ambitious schemes for political authority and domination in India. The fact that the French had borne the brunt of the fight increased their self-importance and the value of their association in the eyes of the country powers.

On 7 August Muzaffar Jang and Chanda Sahib entered Arcot and took possession of the city and the fortress without any opposition. There Muzaffar Jang proclaimed himself subahdar of the Deccan and nominated Chanda Sahib nawab of Karnatak. Most of the jagirdars and qiladars of Karnatak offered their submission to the victor of Ambur. From Arcot Muzaffar Jang and Chanda Sahib proceeded to

Pondicherry where Dupleix held a grand darbar in which Muzaffar Jang was installed as subahdar of the Deccan. Muzaffar, on his part, declared Dupleix to be the nawab of all the country south of the Krishna down to Cape Comorin, including Mysore and Karnatak. He also assigned to the French the districts of Villiyannallur, Valudavur and Bahur, comprising 81 villages. Muzaffar Jang in his abundant gratitude also presented to Dupleix the sea-port of Masulipatam and the island of Divy with an area of about 72 square miles, yielding an annual revenue of rupees 8 lakhs.⁵⁵ The villages of the Bahur jagir, 36 in number, lay immediately surrounding the limits of Fort St David and carried the French outposts up to the Ponniar river, 12 miles south of Pondicherry. The English authorities on the east coast, who had their headquarters at this time at Fort St David, viewed these developments with alarm as they bore the menacing aspect of a scheme to cut off all trade and communication of the English with the interior of the country as also their supplies of provisions.⁵⁶

After a sojourn of ten days at Pondicherry Muzaffar Jang left the place on 10 October 1749, and Chanda Sahib joined him a little later.

DEATH OF NASIR JANG

When Nasir Jang was apprised of the result of the battle of Ambur, he collected a large army and sent orders to the tributary chiefs to join him on the line of march towards Karnatak. Altogether his army consisted of 70,000 horse and 100,000 foot as also a large train of artillery.⁵⁷ He had also hired three bodies of Marathas, one of which was commanded by Murari Rao Chorpade. He arrived on the bank of the Colerbon, the southern boundary of Karnatak, in February 1750. On his march to Areot he was joined by the Pathan nawabs of Cuddapah, Kurnool and Savanur.

Nasir Jang, on entering Karnatak summoned Muhammad Ali son of Anwar-ud-din, to join him from Trichinopoly. He also despatched letters to Fort St David, asking the English to send a body of troops. The English, seeing that their interest lay in siding with Nasir Jang against the French protege Muzaffar Jang, sent a detachment of 600 Europeans under Major Lawrence to his camp. Captain Dalton, a member of the Council, accompanied Major Lawrence to treat with

⁵⁵ Martineau, *Dupleix et l'Inde Francaise*, III, 98.

⁵⁶ Despatches from Fort St David, 18 October 1749 (Records of Fort St George), *Forrest, Bengal and Madras Papers*, II, 1688-1757.

⁵⁷ *Hadiqat-ul-'Alam*, II.

Nasir Jang about the commercial interests of the East India Company.⁵⁸

When Major Lawrence arrived at Nasir Jang's camp at Gingee, Muzaffar Jang and Chanda Sahib with the French force under the command of d'Auteuil, the victor of Ambur, were at a short distance away. On this occasion, however, a number of French officers under d'Auteuil were in a state of great dissatisfaction because they had obtained no share in the plunder which the others had brought from Tanjore. Some of them resigned their commissions; some others left the army and retreated to Pondicherry. Chanda Sahib followed the French officers to Pondicherry, but Muzaffar Jang still hesitated. His principal officers induced him not to retreat. In the meantime Nasir Jang had sent Shah Nawaz Khan and Muhammad Anwar Khan, who were considered to be exceptionally clever negotiators, to Muzaffar Jang. They managed to bring him into Nasir Jang's camp, assuring him of reconciliation. But Nasir Jang placed Muzaffar Jang on parole and appointed Shah Nawaz Khan to protect him.⁵⁹ Immediately after Muzaffar Jang's arrival in his uncle's camp, his own camp was attacked and many of his troops were slain. The retreating French battalion was pursued by Murari Rao and his Maratha soldiery up to the confines of Pondicherry.

At Pondicherry the news of the retreat of the French battalion, Muzaffar Jang's imprisonment, and the dispersion of his army produced great consternation. But Dupleix showed great serenity and presence of mind. He knew that there was some disaffection in Nasir Jang's camp which he could exploit for his own purpose. He sent ambassadors to Nasir Jang's camp, ostensibly to obtain lenient terms for Muzaffar Jang and Chanda Sahib, but in reality to enter into a conspiracy with the disaffected elements. The French envoys left the camp after a stay of eight days during which they made themselves thoroughly acquainted with the actual state of affairs in Nasir Jang's camp. They managed to establish the means of carrying on correspondence with the discontented Pathan nawabs of Cuddapah, Kurnool and Savanur.

Meanwhile Major Lawrence and Captain Dalton had waited in Nasir Jang's camp and solicited his confirmation of the grant of land near Madras which Muhammad Ali had made to the East India Company in return for the assistance of their troops. But Shah Nawaz Khan regarded such cession as inconsistent with the interests of the subahdar of the Deccan and prevented the sanad from being issued

⁵⁸ Orme, II, 139.

⁵⁹ *Hadiqat-ul-'Alam*

from his office. In disgust Major Lawrence retired with his force to Fort St David. At the same time Nasir Jang, considering the campaign to be over, broke up his camp and marched to Arcot.

This was an opportunity which Dupleix was not slow to seize. He ordered that the French military camp should be established, in defiance of Nasir Jang's authority, on the territory ceded by Muzaffar Jang to the French Company. The French occupied the pagoda of Tiruviti, about 25 miles west of St David, garrisoned it with 50 Europeans and 100 sepoy, and began to collect the revenues of the district. Then, in September 1750, a contingent of troops was sent out under the command of Bussy to attack the fortress of Gingee. Bussy carried the place by storm supported by only four guns. This daring feat established the military reputation of the French throughout Karnatak.

The news of the capture of Gingee by the French roused Nasir Jang to action. He at once marched to Gingee, accompanied by 60,000 infantry, 40,000 horse, and 350 guns. His progress was much delayed by the rainy season. Dupleix opened negotiations for peace. He insisted on the restoration of Muzaffar Jang to his liberty and estates, together with the appointment of Chanda Sahib to the nawabship of Arcot. Nasir Jang refused to agree to these conditions and ordered his troops to march towards Gingee. As the rivers were in flood communications with the neighbouring country were difficult and provisions became scarce.

Dupleix had carried on correspondence with the Pathan nawabs during these weary months. According to their secret instructions the French, under the command of La Touche launched an attack on Nasir Jang's camp on the night of 5 December 1750.⁶⁰ Nasir Jang, enraged at the inaction of a large section of his army, directed his elephant without an escort to the place where the Pathan nawabs were posted. On his getting near the elephant of Himmat Khan of Karnool he was shot at in the breast.⁶¹ Then his head was severed from the body and taken to the tent of Muzaffar Jang. In the evening La Touche, accompanied by his officers, went in ceremony to pay his respects to Muzaffar Jang. The news was proclaimed at Pondicherry by a general discharge of artillery. Muzaffar Jang, accompanied by the Pathan nawabs, went to Pondicherry to visit Depleix

⁶⁰ *Maâthir-ul-Kirâm*, 188.

⁶¹ According to Orme, Nasir Jang was shot dead by the nawab of Cuddalore, while according to *Hadiqat-ul-Alam* and *Maâthir-ul-Kirâm* the actual murderer of Nasir Jang was Himmat Khan of Karnool. The latter account seems to be correct as it is corroborated by French sources.

and consult him on state affairs. In token of his gratitude Muzaffar Jang gave the command of the whole coast, from the river Krishna to Cape Comorin, to Dupleix, and confirmed the gift to the French Company of Masulipatam with its dependencies. He further ordered that the pagodas which were minted in Pondicherry should be legal tender in the whole of Karnatak. Substantial satisfaction was given to the army and more than a million rupees from Nasir Jang's treasury were distributed among the officers as gratuity. But the Pathan nawabs who had been given extravagant promises were greatly disappointed at the treatment meted out to them.

DEATH OF MUZAFFAR JANG : SALABAT JANG AND BUSSY

Muzaffar Jang then took with him from Pondicherry a body of French soldiers under the command of Bussy and started towards Hyderabad. The Pathan nawabs, dissatisfied at not receiving all they had expected, conspired against Muzaffar Jang who was killed in battle at Rayachoti in the jagir of the nawab of Cuddapah. This created great confusion. But the presence of Bussy set matters right. He publicly brought forward and installed Salabat Jang, third son of Nizam-ul-mulk, who was then in the camp. In gratitude for this favour Salabat Jang confirmed to the French all the privileges and concessions granted by Muzaffar Jang, and Bussy was treated with great esteem and distinction. A large amount of money was given to him as present similar liberality was shown towards other French officers. The march was then resumed. Hyderabad was reached on 12 April 1751 and a triumphal entry was made into Aurangabad on 29 June.

After reaching Aurangabad Bussy acquired great influence in the counsels of Salabat Jang, who regarded him as his most trustworthy and tried friend. The Frenchman, on whom was conferred the title of Chazantar Jang, became the virtual ruler of the Deccan; his favour was solicited even by the nobility. He was thinking of great schemes which, if everything had gone well with the French in Karnatak, would undoubtedly have produced far-reaching results. But Bussy went too far and became more and more exacting in his demands on Salabat Jang, thereby provoking hatred of the French in the whole of the Deccan. Sayid Lashkar Khan, the madarul maham, resented the predominance of French influence at the cour. He started to undermine French designs because he thought that they would ultimately lead to the dismemberment of the state.

In 1753 Bussy fell seriously ill at Gulbarga, and was advised by his physicians to go to the sea-coast for a change. Accordingly he

proceeded to Masulipatam, leaving the French troops in charge of Goupil, who had neither tact nor experience. His pride and arrogant manners offended the nobles of the court. His mismanagement of finance created great confusion and unrest among the soldiery. Heavy bills had to be met monthly for the payment of the French troops. The treasury had to borrow from private banks at 3 per cent per month in order to meet its liabilities. Taking advantage of Bussy's absence Savid Lashkar Khan asked Goupil to organize collection of revenues in the districts to procure enough money for the payment of his troops. As the French troops had not received their pay for several months, Goupil agreed to undertake this responsibility, thus adding to the unpopularity of the French. In the meantime Savid Lashkar Khan wrote to Saunders, the English governor of Madras seeking his aid to oust the French from the Deccan. When Dupleix was apprised of this, he immediately wrote to Bussy to proceed to the Deccan, threatening to lay the responsibility for the failure of the French cause in the Deccan on his shoulders. This time Dupleix granted him unlimited authority in order to enable him to take all steps which he might consider called for in emergencies.

After reaching Hyderabad Bussy borrowed huge sums of money from bankers to pay a portion of arrears to his French and Indian soldiery, and directed his energies and influence to replace Savid Lashkar Khan by some one more sympathetic to French interests. He marched to Aurangabad in order to compel Savid Lashkar Khan to concede his demands regarding the arrangements for the payment of his troops. The news of Bussy's approach to Aurangabad created great confusion at the court of Salabat Jang. Savid Lashkar Khan took refuge in the Daulatabad fort, considering resistance to be futile. Apprehensive of his future position, he opened negotiations with Bussy in order to adjust differences, making many excuses and apologies for his past conduct. Bussy, feeling himself master of the situation, was unwilling to impose any hard terms on Salabat Jang or his chief minister. He subtly hinted at certain things which would serve his purpose. Savid Lashkar Khan finding his plans disconcerted by Bussy, was forced to bend before his erstwhile enemy and come to a settlement with him.

In the negotiations that followed Bussy insisted that unless the punctual payment of his force was guaranteed, it would be impossible for him to maintain it in a state of efficiency. On this ground he asked that the coastal districts of the northern sarkars should be given to him in lease (*iijara*) for 24 lakhs of rupees for the payment and equipment of his troops. Thus were added to the territory of the French authorities at Pondicherry the fertile districts of Chicacole,

Rajahmundry, Ellur and Mustafanagar. Technically speaking, these districts were leased to Bussy personally to meet the salaries of the French troops under his command, although the previous assignments of the districts of Masulipatam and Condavir were granted by Muzaffar Jang and later confirmed by Salabat Jang to the French East India Company directly. But usually any grant made to an employee of the Company was to be considered as having been made to the Company itself. Probably this was done purposely in order to leave the English under the impression that the French had no intention of political nature in possessing these territories and proposed to use the income for a specific purpose, viz. the payment of their troops. But the English were under no illusion regarding the far reaching effects of this arrangement; it excited their jealousy and made them anxious to avail themselves of the first available pretext for taking possession of these fertile districts.

The lease granted to the French changed their political status in the Deccan. They no longer remained mere mercenaries; on the contrary they acquired the right of lease-holders (*sijaradars*) who were obliged to keep a body of troops to furnish aid to the state on demand. The French troops became the sole guardians of Salabat Jang's person, which resulted in their acquiring extensive power and influence at the court. Bussy advised Salabat Jang to dismiss Savid Lashkar Khan and appoint Shah Nawaz Khan, Samsam-ud-daulah, author of the well known biographical dictionary of Mughal peerage, *Mi'athir ul umāra* to the post of the chief minister. But he too resented the paramount influence of the French in the affairs of the state and tried to undermine Bussy's position. The anti-French party at Aurangabad under the leadership of Mir Nizam Ali Khan, Salabat Jang's brother accused the French of having carried away all the wealth of the Deccan. Shah Nawaz Khan, on his part, opened secret negotiations with the English governor of Madras, and persisted in his purpose of ridding the Deccan of the French.

The French Directors, alarmed at the ambitious schemes of Dupleix, resolved in 1753 to recall him as they had no wish to set out on schemes of territorial aggrandizement for the time being. In 1754 Dupleix was superseded by Cadehu who reversed his policy and made peace with the English. But the situation changed in 1756: the Seven Years' War was launched in Europe, the English and the French leading the hostile camps. The French government sent out Count Lally, instructing him to concentrate his efforts upon seizing the fortified stations of the English on the east coast and uprooting their commerce. In 1758 Lally ordered Bussy to repair from Hyderabad to Pondicherry. He reluctantly obeyed, leaving behind an

escort of 200 French soldiers as body guard of Salabat Jang, and virtually relinquishing the predominant position of the French at the nizam's court.

SALABAT JANG AND THE ENGLISH

Meanwhile the victory at Plassey (June 1757) had secured the English Company's position in Bengal. An English force under Colonel Forde, sent from Bengal, occupied Rajahmundry and Masulipatam, the headquarters of the French administration in the northern sarkars. This was a crushing blow to French influence in the Deccan and the Coromandel coast. The French in their extremity had sought help from Salabat Jang, who advanced with a body of troops from Hyderabad. While he was within 15 miles of Masulipatam, he was apprised that the latter place had fallen into the hands of the English. Unwilling to identify himself with what appeared to be a losing cause, Salabat Jang concluded a treaty (14 July 1759), with the English, with whom he was now brought into direct relations for the first time. This treaty granted to the English the sarkars of Masulipatam, Nizampatan and Condavir (comprising altogether an area of about 700 square miles as an inam.⁶² The sanads for these districts were to be granted to the English in the same manner as was done to the French. Both parties to the treaty agreed that they would not assist the enemies of the other, nor give them protection of any kind. Salabat Jang agreed to exclude the French from his dominions. He also promised that he would not call the raja of Vizianagram to account for whatever he had collected during the French regime, but his future liability to make regular payment of tribute to the ruler of Hyderabad was recognized.

MARATHA INTERVENTION

For obvious reasons the Marathas could not remain indifferent to the war of succession in the Deccan. Peshwa Balaji Baji Rao started for Aurangabad early in 1751, subjugating the north Godavari region. On hearing of Muzaffar Jang's death and Salabat Jang's installation he decided in favour of direct intervention. He took steps to bring the late Asaf Jah's eldest son Ghazi-ud-din, the Amir-ul-umara in Delhi, to the Deccan to claim his inheritance. Pending this new claimant's

⁶² Inam is a gift by a superior to an inferior. The term is applied to grants of rent-free lands in which the state gives up its rights to the land revenue in favour of an individual or an institution in perpetuity or without any reference to perpetuity or any specified condition. The rights conveyed by this grant are not transferable by sale or gift.

arrival Balaji concluded a 'friendly arrangement' with Salabat Jang who agreed to pay 17 lakhs as the price of the peshwa's non-intervention (March 1751). Hostilities, however, broke out in November 1751. A year later Ghazi-ud-din arrived in the Deccan at the head of 15,000 men and encountered no opposition. He met the peshwa, but sudden death⁶³ removed him from the scene (October 1752) before he could challenge Salabat Jang's position. Undaunted, the Marathas surrounded Salabat Jang and forced upon him the treaty of Bhalki (November 1752) by which large slices of territory in Berar and Khandesh had to be surrendered.⁶⁴ The Marathas secured a continuous belt of territory all along the western boundary of the Hyderabad state right up to the territories of Sindhia and Holkar.

While engaged in reducing Savanur as an ally of the Marathas Bussy received a letter of dismissal from Salabat Jang (May 1756); but a few months later he was reinstalled in his former position. He kept himself studiously aloof when the Marathas again invaded Salabat Jang's dominions in the later months of 1757 and secured territories worth 25 lakhs. Bussy's grip over Salabat Jang now became firmer. On the Frenchman's advice his confidential secretary Haidar Jang was appointed chief minister in place of Shah Nawaz Khan. But Haidar Jang was murdered by Mir Nizam Ali Khan who suspected that Bussy intended to make him a prisoner for his antipathy towards the French. This happened in May 1758. A month later Bussy left Hyderabad under orders from Lally, leaving behind him a situation which Salabat Jang was too weak to control.

For about a year Nizam Ali and his younger brother Basalat Jang fought for power. Salabat Jang sinking steadily to the position of a puppet. Nizam Ali won. In October 1759, he became Salabat Jang's diwan with full powers of administration. In November the peshwa succeeded in getting possession of the important fortress of Ahmadnagar by bribing the qiladar. Nizam Ali was ill-prepared to undertake large-scale operations against the Marathas, deprived as he was of the help of the French auxiliaries after Salabat Jang's treaty with the English. Yet he could not relinquish the fortress of Ahmadnagar without a struggle. His army encountered the Marathas under Sadashiv Rao Bhau at Udgir and suffered a severe defeat in February 1760. According to the treaty which was concluded between the parties, Nizam Ali agreed to cede the forts of Daulatabad, Asirgarh and Bijapur; the possession of Ahmadnagar was confirmed, and several

⁶³ According to *Hadiqat ul-'Alam* (I, 237) he died of cholera. Sardesai (*New History of the Marathas*, II, 324) says that he "met with his death suddenly by poison at a dinner to which he was invited by Nizam Ali's mother".

⁶⁴ *Khazana-i-'Amrīd*, 62. For the Maratha version see Sardesai, II, 325.

districts including parts of the subhas of Bijapur and Aurangabad and half of the subah of Bidar were to be ceded. The annual revenue of these ceded territories exceeded 62 lakhs of rupees.⁶⁵

NIZAM ALI'S REIGN

The inglorious defeat and the humiliating peace did not weaken Nizam Ali's position at home. In July 1762 he imprisoned Salabat Jang in the fortress of Bidar. In September 1763 Salabat Jang was put to death⁶⁶ and Nizam Ali ascended the masnad. He ruled over the Deccan for more than four decades.

Nizam Ali's relations with the Marathas, Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan, and the English will be narrated in later chapters of the present and succeeding volumes of this History. The position of the Hyderabad state at the end of his long rule was quite different from what it had been at the time of his father's death. It shrank territorially, it declined in power and prestige. In Asaf Jahi's later years the authority of the subahdar of the Deccan extended from the Narmada to Trichinopoly and from Masulipatam to Bijapur. In the second half of the eighteenth century new forces entered into the political life of the country. The result of the struggle between the English and the French freed Muhammad Ali of Arcot from the Nizam's control. On the east coast the northern sarkars were given away to the English. In the north, west and south the Marathas made large encroachments. The disappearance of Mughal suzerainty created a vacuum which was filled up by the paramountcy of the English. Defeated by the Marathas in 1795, too wise or too weak to adopt Tipu's bold policy of challenging the rising British power, Nizam Ali sought survival in submission to the new masters of India. His subsidiary treaties with Lord Wellesley's government converted a leading vassal of the Mughal empire into Britain's 'Most Faithful Ally'.

⁶⁵ *Khazâna-i-'Âmira*, 65.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 71. *Hadîqat-ul 'Âlam*, II, 11.

CHAPTER EIGHT

RISE OF THE SIKH POWER

RISE OF BANDA SINGH

After the death of Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth and the last Guru, the political leadership of the Sikhs came into the hands of Banda Singh, whom the Guru had converted to his faith and baptized as a regular *Singh*. He was born on 27 October 1670 at Rajauri in the Punch district of western Kashmir. He was known as Lachhman Das in his childhood. His father Kam Dev was a Rajput farmer. In his youth he decided to lead an ascetic's life. He became a *banagi* and took the name of Madho Das. Like the sadhus of this order he wandered from place to place until he came to Nasik on the banks of the Godavari, where he entered the hermitage of an old yogi, Aughar Nath, and learnt occultism from him. After his preceptor's death, he moved to Nander and established a monastery of his own. He took delight in practising tricks of magic on his unwary visitors. He tried to do the same thing with Guru Gobind Singh who visited him in his monastery in September 1708, but he had to submit to the Guru. Before the Guru's death he was sent to the Punjab to continue the struggle with the Mughal government. The Guru gave him a drum and a banner as emblems of temporal authority, and bestowed on him five arrows from his own quiver as a pledge of victory. On parting he enjoined on him to remain pure in conduct, to be true in word and deed, to look upon himself as a servant of the Khalsa who would be the Guru in future, and to act always upon the advice of the five Sikhs (Baj Singh, Binod Singh, Kahan Singh and others), sent along with him.

Thus raised to the position of the commander of the Khalsa, Banda Singh proceeded to the north and from the neighbourhood of Sehri and Khanda, in the parganah of Kharkhanda, he despatched the *hukam-namas* of Guru Gobind Singh to the leading Sikhs in the Punjab, calling upon them to join him.

He told them that he was coming to punish Wazir Khan, the faujdar of Sirhind, and his Hindu assistant, Sucha Nand, for having killed the Guru's younger sons. He would also chastise the Hill rajas who had

ill-treated the Guru. The Sikhs flocked to his banner from all quarters. Chaudhuri Ram Singh and Chaudhuri Tilok Singh of the Phulkian family liberally contributed to his resources. In a few months the whole Sikh peasantry was up in arms to wreak their vengeance upon Sirhind.

BANDA SINGH'S EXPLOITS

Banda marched in the direction of Sirhind, plundering and destroying the important places on his way. On 26 November 1709 he suddenly fell upon Samana, the native place of Jalal-ud-din, who had been employed to kill Guru Tegh Bahadur. Before nightfall the palatial buildings of the city were a heap of ruins. About 10,000 Muslims are said to have lost their lives, and an immense booty fell into the hands of the Sikhs.¹ Passing through Ghuram, Thaska, Shahabad and Mustafabad, which fell before Banda Singh without much resistance, he attacked the town of Kapuri. Its commander, Qadam-ud-din, was notorious for his lustful orgies, stories of which are still current after the lapse of over two and a half centuries. Banda Singh was determined to chastise this depraved officer. He set fire to the strongholds of Qadam-ud-din, who probably perished in the general conflagration.

Banda Singh next turned his attention to Sadaura, which was another centre of oppression. The Hindus of this place complained to him against the local ruler, Usman Khan, saying that they were not allowed to cremate their dead or to perform any religious ceremony. Cows were slaughtered before their houses and their blood and entrails were left in the streets. He had also offended the Sikhs by torturing to death the great Muslim saint, Sayid Badr ud-din Shah, popularly known as Budhu Shah, simply for his having helped Guru Gobind Singh in the battle of Bhangani. The Sikhs marched upon Sadaura; the aggrieved peasants swelled the numbers of the invaders and rushed into the town. The angry mob got out of hand; all those who had taken shelter in the mansion of Sayid Budhu Shah were put to the sword. The place has since then been called the *qatalgarhi* or slaughter-house.²

Banda Singh was following an easterly circuitous route in order to give time to the Sikhs of the Doaba and the Majha to cut their way through the opposition of the Malerkotla Afghans, who were blocking the passage of the Sutlej, and to join him before he attacked Sirhind.

¹ *The Phulkian States Gazetteer* (1904), 205, *Prachin Panth Prakash*, 102-3.

² Harisi, *Ihratnama*, 40b, *Prachin Panth Prakash*, 104; Karam Singh, *Banda Bahadur* 55-59. There is nothing on record, even in Muslim histories, to support the exaggerated statements of *Shamshir Khalsa* and *Prachin Panth Prakash* with regard to the desecration of the tombs of pirs, exhumation of the dead and their cremation.

CONQUEST OF SIRHIND

Sirhind represented everything that was abominable to the Sikhs. It was here that the younger sons of Guru Gobind Singh had been done to death by the order of Wazir Khan. It was this man who had harassed the Guru at Anandpur, attacked him at Chamkaur, where his elder sons were killed, and pursued him to Muktsar, where the forty 'Saved Ones' met their death. Again, it was probably this Wazir Khan whose emissaries had assassinated the Guru himself at Nander. The Sikhs were burning with rage to wreak their vengeance on the ruler of this town which was then called *Guru-mari*. It was, therefore, looked upon as a sacred duty to take part in the coming crusade.

There were three classes of men who joined Banda Singh in this campaign. First, there were those who belonged to the school of Guru Gobind Singh, and now rallied round his military successor in a spirit of devotion and self-sacrifice to carry on the struggle against the enemies of their country and religion. There were others who had been sent by such leaders as Bani Singh and Tilok Singh of the Phul family, who could not personally join the expedition but sympathized with the cause and desired to render every possible help for its success. The third class was composed of irregulars who had been attracted by the prospect of plunder and private revenge. It was mostly the people of this class who were responsible for indiscriminate murder and loot. About 40,000 men are said to have assembled on the occasion but this estimate of Kifri Khan appears to be very much exaggerated. Banda Singh had no artillery, no elephants and not even a sufficient number of horses for all his men. Wazir Khan came out with all his resources to meet the advancing Sikhs. His army was probably about 20,000 strong. It had a number of field-guns, zamburaks and a long line of elephants.

The battle was fought on the plain of Chippa-Chini on 12 May 1710. In the first shock of battle the booty-loving irregulars in the ranks of Banda took to their heels. They were followed by a thousand men who had been smuggled in by a nephew of Sucha Nand. To stem the tide of desertion Banda Singh himself rushed to the front and boldly led the attack. "The Sikhs" says the author of *Ahval-i-Salatin-i-Hind*, "came face to face with Muhammadans, rapidly discharged their muskets and reduced the battle to a hand-to-hand fight. The commander of the Muhammadans [Wazir Khan] and some of his men fought so bravely that heaps of the bodies of the infidels [Sikhs] fell to the ground, piled one upon another and there was din on all sides like that of Doomsday. At last the whole Muham-

madan army was destroyed."³ Wazir Khan himself fell. Confusion spread in the Muslim ranks, and the Sikhs fiercely fell upon them. "Not a man of the army of Islam", says Khafi Khan, "escaped with more than his life and the clothes he stood in. Horsemen and footmen fell under the swords of the infidels [Sikhs], who pursued them as far as Sirhind."⁴

Sirhind itself, which was about ten miles from the scene of battle, was taken two days later, on 14 May, after a short but sharp struggle in which 500 Sikhs lost their lives. The city was ransacked and only those Muslims who had either fled away or hidden themselves in disguise in the houses of Hindus, escaped injury. Some Hindus too, like Sucha Nand,⁵ who had made themselves particularly obnoxious to the Sikhs for their complicity in the crimes of Wazir Khan, came in for their share of punishment. The booty that fell into the hands of the Sikhs is estimated at two crores, in money and goods belonging to Wazir Khan, and some lakhs found in the deserted houses of Sucha Nanda and others.⁶

"The *Siyār-ul-mutākhkhirīn* as well as the *Muntakhab-ul-Lubāb* contain terrible details of atrocious deeds of the Sikhs", writes Thornton, "but a Mohammedan writer is not to be implicitly trusted upon such a point."⁷ Very fruitful imagination seems to have been at work in ascribing every kind of cruelty to the Sikhs. They are said to have desecrated mosques and 'torn open the wombs of pregnant women, dashing every living child upon the ground'.⁸ Such statements are blindly repeated by later writers like Latif. But there is no particular instance given of the alleged outrages. The mausoleum of Sheikh Ahmad *Mujaddid Alif Sani* still stands as it did before the battle, and is . sufficient evidence of the exaggeration in Latif's statement'.⁹ Only the Sikh chronicles mention the digging up of the grave—and that too for the performance of the last rites—of Bibi Anup Kaur, a Sikh woman, who had been carried away by Sher Muhammad Khan¹⁰ and buried after she had committed suicide to save her honour.

The city was spared complete destruction at the intervention of local Hindus who appealed to Banda Singh for mercy, and amnesty

³ Folio 35b-38b.

⁴ *Muntakhab-ul-Lubāb*, II, 654

⁵ Muhammad Qasim, *Ibratnāma*, 21.

⁶ Kamwar Khan, *Tazkirat-ul-Salatin-i-Chughtayia*, 150b.

⁷ *History of the Panjab* (1848), I, 176

⁸ Khafi Khan, II, 654.

⁹ Narang, *Transformation of Sikhism*, 107.

¹⁰ 'Ināyat 'Alī Khan, *Description of Kolla Afghans*, 14.

was granted to the inhabitants on their paying a large ransom. The curse, however, is still attached to the city, and even now a pious Sikh, when travelling to the north or south of Sirhind, may be seen pulling out a brick or two from its ruins and conveying the same to the waters of the Sutlej or the Jamuna.

BANDA SINGH AS RULER

Baj Singh, a companion and counsellor of Banda, was appointed governor of Sirhind, with Ali Singh of Salauli as his deputy. Fateh Singh, of the Bhat-ke family, was given charge of Samana, and Ram Singh, brother of Baj Singh, that of Thaneswar, jointly with Baba Bimod Singh. The imperial deputies in charge of the various parganas of Sirhind were so terrified that they submitted to the authority of Banda Singh without striking a blow. Thus the entire district of Sirhind, extending from Karnal to Ludhiana and yielding a revenue of about 35 lakhs a year, came into the hands of the Sikhs.

Strange conversions were noticed as a result of Banda Singh's overbearing influence. "The authority of that deluded sect [of the Sikhs] has reached such extremes," wrote Amm-ud-daulah in June 1710, "that many Hindus and Muhammadans, finding no alternative to obedience and submission, adopted their faith and ritual. Their chief captivated the hearts of all towards his inclinations and, whether Hindu or Muhammadan, whoever came in contact with him, was addressed as a *Singh*. . . . a large number of Muhammadans abandoned Islam and followed the misguided path and took solemn oaths and firm pledges to stand by him."¹¹

Banda fixed upon Mukhlispur, a pleasant, hilly place near Sadhaura, as his headquarters, and repairing its old neglected fort, renamed it Lohgarh, or Iron Castle. He assumed royal authority, and struck coins in the name of the Guru.¹² He also introduced an official seal¹³

¹¹ *Rugrat-i-Amru ud-daulah* (letter 3).

¹² The coins had an inscription on one side which may be translated as follows:

*By the grace of the True Lord is struck the coin in the two worlds,
The sword of Nanak is the granter of all devotions, and
the Victory is of Guru Gobind Singh the king of kings.*

The reverse had an inscription in praise of his newly founded capital which may be translated as follows:

*Struck in the City of Peace, illustrating the beauty of civic life,
and the ornament of the blessed throne.*

¹³ The seal contained an inscription expressive of his deep sense of devotion and loyalty to his Master. It may be translated as follows:

*The Kettle and the Sword (symbols of Charity and Power),
and Victory and ready Patronage,
have been obtained from Guru Nanak-Gobind Singh.*

for his state documents and letters patent. He started his own regnal year from the date of his conquest of Sirhind. He had no time to organize any regular system of administration. One measure, however, was very conspicuous, and has had great influence on the future fiscal history of the Punjab. It was the abolition of the zamindari system prevailing in the country.

The zamindars or landlords, who had been mostly government officials responsible for payment of fixed land revenue of the villages entrusted to them, had come to arrogate to themselves the position of absolute proprietors who could eject the actual cultivators at their sweet will. The authorities did not interfere in their internal arrangements so long as they paid their contributions regularly. They were free to exact any amount from the peasants who were practically reduced to the position of slaves. Once, says a local tradition, people from the neighbourhood of Sadhaura came to Banda complaining of the miseries practised by their landlords. He ordered Baj Singh to open fire on them. They were astonished at the strange reply to their representation, and asked him what it meant. He told them that they deserved no better treatment when, being thousands in number, they still allowed themselves to be cowed down by a handful of zamindars. Why should not the Khalsa of the Guru feel strong enough to redress its own wrongs? The remedy suggested was successfully applied, and the landlords were ejected. The example was followed in other parts of the country. The result was that the tillers of the soil became masters, and in course of time the curse of the zamindari system was lifted from the Punjab.

The Sikhs were now fired with a new zeal. Success made them confident. They started on a career of conquest, and every method, including loot and sabotage, which would cripple the resources of the enemy, was considered justified.

Every Sikh, of whatever station in life, felt to have been providentially raised above everyone of his fellow-subjects and destined to be a ruler. 'In all the parganas occupied by the Sikhs', says Irvine, 'the reversal of the previous customs was striking and complete. A low scavenger or leather-dresser, the lowest of the low in Indian estimation, had only to leave home and join the Guru [meaning Banda Singh], when in a short time he would return to his birth-place as its ruler with his order of appointment in his hand. As soon as he set foot within the boundaries, the well-born and wealthy went out to greet him and escort him home. Arrived there, they stood before him with joined palms, awaiting his orders... Not a soul dared to disobey an order, and men who had often risked themselves in battle-

fields, became so cowed down that they were afraid even to remonstrate."¹⁴

INVASION OF THE GANGETIC DOAB

The victory at Sirhind was a signal for a general rising of the Sikhs all over the country. We shall take up first the spearhead of the movement led by Banda Singh himself. The trouble arose in the parganah of Deoband. A few converts to Sikhism in that area complained to Banda Singh that they were being persecuted by Jalal Khan, the local Faujdar. Banda Singh led his warriors across the Jamuna and marched on Saharanpur on the way to Jalalabad. Ali Hamid Khan, the Faujdar of Saharanpur, fled to Delhi, but the people led by local officers put the place in a state of defence and received the Sikhs with showers of arrows and bullets. The Sikhs proved more than a match for them and reduced the place. With the fall of the city half of the sarkar of Saharanpur came into the possession of the Sikhs.¹⁵ A detachment was sent to chastise the pirzadas of Behat (17 miles to the north of Saharanpur), who were notorious for their anti-Hindu activities. The town was sacked and the pirzadas were killed to a man.¹⁶

The whole force then prepared itself to march towards Jalalabad, which lay about 30 miles to the south. Banda Singh addressed a letter to Jalal Khan demanding his submission. A typical Afghan that he was, he refused to give in, and, to make matters worse, he mounted the Sikh messengers on asses, and parading them through the streets of Jalalabad turned them out of the town. This added fresh fuel to the fire, and the Sikhs rushed towards Jalalabad with all haste. On their way they replenished their resources with rich booty obtained from Ambelita. On 21 July 1710 they reached Nanauta, where a determined resistance was offered to them by the local Sheikhzadas; but it was all in vain. The Sikhs were reinforced by the Gujars who had long suffered at the hands of the Sheikhzadas and who now declared themselves to be Nanak prast or followers of Guru Nanak. A sanguinary battle was fought in the streets of the town, and, according to the diary of Zafar ud-din, a contemporary writer, as many as 200 Sheikhzadas fell dead in a single courtyard. Nanauta was razed to the ground. It has since then been called the *Phuta Shahr* or the Ruined Town.¹⁷

¹⁴ *Later Mughals*, I, 98-99.

¹⁵ Harisi, *Ibrahim-nâma*, Ha-b. Irvine, *Later Mughals*, I, 101.

¹⁶ *Calcutta Review*, LX, 23.

¹⁷ Khafi Khan, II, 655. Elliot and Dowson, VII, 416. *Later Mughals*, I, 101-2. *Calcutta Review*, LX, 23. Neville, *Muzaffarnagar*, 174.

Jalalabad was besieged next. After the reduction of a couple of suburban villages, heavy rains and flood of the river Krishna made it extremely difficult for the Sikhs to continue the siege. They retired to the Jullundur Doab, where their presence was more urgently needed. But the campaign had shaken the whole countryside up to the walls of Delhi. The reports of the Sikh incursions into Sirhind and the Gangetic Doab alarmed the emperor, Bahadur Shah, who was then in Rajputana on his way from the Deccan. He moved his forces northward for the suppression of the Sikhs.

OCCUPATION OF JULLUNDUR DOAB

After the fall of Sirhind the Sikhs felt everywhere that the day of their deliverance had arrived. The nearest territory to feel the stir was the Jullundur Doab, where the Sikhs rose as one man to throw off the yoke of the Mughals. They began by ousting a number of petty officials and replacing them with Sikhs. They addressed a letter, in the form of a parwana, to Shams Khan, the faujdar of Jullundur, calling upon him to introduce certain reforms and to hand over his treasure personally to the Khalsa. After a show of submission the faujdar came out to give a fight. He appealed to the Muslims in the name of religion, and declared a *jihad* against the Sikhs. According to Khafi Khan, more than a hundred thousand crusaders mostly weavers, were collected and they marched out from Sultanpur with great display. In addition to these raw forces Shams Khan was able to muster about 5000 horse and 30,000 foot.¹⁸ The Sikhs according to Khafi Khan had 70,000 to 80,000 horse and foot. The number seems to be exaggerated. They sent an urgent message to Banda Singh, who was then busy in the Gangetic Doab, to hurry to the Punjab.

Seeing the larger forces of the enemy, the Sikhs retired to Rahon, a few miles from Sultanpur. Here they were besieged for several days; but finding that they were fighting against heavy odds, they slipped away under cover of darkness from their entrenchments. This was however, only a ruse. Seeing next morning that Shams Khan had gone away to Sultanpur, his capital leaving a small force in the fort of Rahon, they rushed upon the fort and drove out the garrison (12 October 1710).¹⁹ Jullundur and Hoshiarpur were occupied without a blow, and in a short time the whole Doab passed into the hands of the Sikhs.

The tracts of Majha and Riarki, forming the central Punjab, were

¹⁸ *Maâstr-ul-umard*, III, 127; Harisi, 'Bhratnâma', 42a; Khafi Khan, II, 658

¹⁹ Elliot and Dowson, VII, 418-19; *Later Mughals*, I, 100.

delivered at the same time. Here too the Sikh rising was so general that the local officials, not feeling equal to the task of purely military resistance, had to resort to a religious crusade against the insurgents. "The entire Khalsa from the Majha and other areas, numbering about eight thousand, assembled at Amritsar, and having conferred together overran the territories of the Panjab."²⁰ Leaving aside the strong parganahs of Lahore and Qasur for the present, they turned their attention to Batala and Kalanaur first, and turning out the government officials established their own thanas and tehsils. Some of the Sikh leaders, particularly those of Sitthala and Butala, moved on further north and occupied the parganah of Pathankot.²¹

The main body of the Sikhs carried their arms to the very walls of Lahore. Savid Aslam Khan, the governor of Lahore, was seized with terror and dared not move out to meet them. The *mullas* took the lead. They raised a green banner called the Haidri Flag.²² and proclaimed a *μhad* or crusade against the Sikhs. So fervent was the appeal made to Muslim sentiment that many wealthy traders and high-placed men sold off their belongings and made large contributions to the funds of the crusade. Some Hindu officials, too, joined them.

The Sikhs had stationed themselves in the fort of Bhagwant Rai at the village named Bharat near Lahore. After suffering a close siege, in which they put up a bold defence, they sallied forth one night and broke through the enemy's lines. Sadly disappointed at this discomfiture, the *ghazis* returned to Lahore and in chagrin insulted the Hindus of the city and threatened their own rulers.²³

Another force sent out against the Sikhs lying near Kotla Begam met the same fate. The final battle of this campaign was fought at Bhilowal, where the Sikhs fell upon the unsuspecting *ghazis* returning to Lahore and inflicted a heavy defeat on them. The whole territory of Majha and Biarki became a Sikh possession.²⁴

CLASH WITH IMPERIAL FORCES

The Sikhs were now masters of the Punjab east of Lahore. According to Idrat Khan, "there was no nobleman daring enough to march from Delhi against them." Malcolm says, "If Bahadur Shah

²⁰ *Chahār Gulshan-i-Panjah*, 189-90; Qasim, *Ihratnāma*, 22; Irvine, I, 103.

²¹ Qasim, *Ihratnāma*, 22; Khafi Khan, II, 860; *Prachin Panth Prakash*, 117.

²² The *Panth Prakash* of Ratan Singh and of Gyan Singh both place the Haidri Flag crusade long after the death of Banda Singh, but we have followed here the contemporary work, *Ihratnāma* of Qasim and also *Umdat-ut-Tawārikh* and *Chahār Gulshan-i-Panjah* which are based on original sources.

²³ Qasim, *Ihratnāma*, 23.

²⁴ *Ibid.*; *Rūkā-i-Sahibnamā*, 190-92; *Umdat-ut-Tawārikh*, 79-80.

had not quitted the Deccan, which he did in 1710, there is every reason to think the whole of Hindustan would have been subdued by these . . . invaders.²⁵

On receipt of the news of the Sikh disturbances in the Punjab, the emperor left Ajmir on 27 June 1710, and moved towards the north. He called upon the subahdars of Delhi and Avadh, the faujdars and nazims of Muradabad and Allahabad and the Sayids of Barha to march towards the Punjab. He had the Sikhs so much on his brain that he looked at every bearded man with suspicion. On 8 September he issued an order that all Hindus employed in the imperial offices should get their beards shaved, because he feared that there might be Sikhs disguised among them. The tales brought to him about Banda Singh were very disturbing. It was said that the Sikh leader was possessed of supernatural powers, that flames issued from his mouth, and that weapons could have no effect upon him or his followers.²⁶

A mammoth Mughal army moved against the Sikhs, who retired from Thaneswar and Sirhind and took their stand at the fort of Lohgarh. The imperial forces reached its neighbourhood on 4 December, and were encamped at Sadhaura, when the Sikhs fell upon them with showers of arrows and musket balls. "It is impossible for me", says Khafi Khan, "to describe the fight which followed. The Sikhs in their fakir's dress struck terror into the royal troops. The number of the dead and dying of the imperialists was so large that for a time it appeared as if they were going to lose." The imperial troops were, however, soon reinforced, and by sunset the Sikhs began retreating towards the fort of Lohgarh.²⁷

This hilly retreat of Banda Singh's forces was closely invested by over 6,000 horse and foot; but the place was so well fortified that the emperor dared not attack it for some time. The Sikhs inside, however, were short of provisions, and had no hope of standing a long siege. They are said to have eaten their horses and other beasts to satisfy their hunger. In despair they decided to rush out and cut their way through the enemy's ranks. One Gulab Singh, pay-master of the Sikh forces, offered to sacrifice his life for the good of his religion, and dressing himself in the garments of Banda Singh seated himself in his place. Banda Singh made a determined sally on the night of 10 December, and disappeared with all his men in the hills of Nahan.²⁸

²⁵ Sketch, 99.

²⁶ *Later Mughals*, I, 111; *Hadiqat-ul-'Aqâlim*, 129.

²⁷ Khafi Khan, II, 689-70. Kamwar, *Tazkira*, 153a.

²⁸ Iradat Khan, *Memoirs*, 62; Khafi Khan, II, 672-73; *Dasturâl Inshâ*, 8b; *Rugâat-h-Amin-ud-daulah*, letter 4; Qâsim, *Ibrâtnâma*; Kamwar, *Tazkira*, 154b.

The place was taken next morning by the Mughal commander Munim Khan, but to his disappointment 'the hawk had flown', leaving only a substitute in the person of Gulab Singh, and a few dead and dying. The emperor's displeasure knew no bounds. He ordered one of his nobles, Hamid Khan, to pursue the escaped leader into the hills, and to bring him alive if possible, if not then the *Barfi Raja* (Ice King) of Nahan was to be hauled up.

At this time according to the *Akhbār-i-Barbār-i-Muallā*, an imperial order was issued by Emperor Bahadur Shah on 10 December 1710 (29th Shawwal 1122 A.H. Bahadur Shahi 4) for an indiscriminate massacre of the Sikhs wherever found—*Nānak-prastān rā har jā kītī bayāband bi-kushand*.

As Banda Singh had escaped beyond the reach of his pursuers Bhup Prakash the raja of Nahan was made prisoner and was carried, along with Gulab Singh in an iron cage to Delhi.

BANDA SINGH IN THE HILLS

Within a fortnight of his escape Banda Singh issued circular letters, called *hukamnamas*, to the Sikhs of various places calling upon them to join him at once.²⁹ In response to this call Sikhs from all directions flocked to him at Kiratpur and he was able to lead an expedition against some of the Hindu chiefs who had been troubling the last Guru.³⁰ Raja Bhim Chand of Kahlur was the first to attract his attention. As usual he was called upon by a *paricana* to submit. But old fire still burned in him and he chose to offer resistance. His capital, Bilaspur was stormed and his forces decimated. The other rajas then came in readily to submit. Raja Sidh Sain of Mandi declared himself to be a follower of Guru Nanak and helped Banda Singh in his difficulties with the raja of Kulu. Raja Udu Singh of Chamba allied himself with the Sikh leader and gave him in marriage a handsome girl from his own family.

For some time Banda Singh made the northern hills his home, coming down only occasionally to exert himself in the plains.

He then declared that he had no enmity with the Muslims as such and that they were free to join his forces for the redress of their grievances against the oppressions of the Mughal officials. The result was that as many as five thousand Muslims joined him in the neigh-

²⁹ One such letter, dated Poh 12, Sammat 1 (12 December 1710), addressed to the Sikhs of Jaunpur, communicated to them 'the order of the Sri Saccha Sahib' to 'repair to the presence, wearing five arms', and declared: "We have brought about the *Satyayuga*."

³⁰ This account of the expedition to the Siwaliks is based mainly on Ratan Singh, *Prachin Panth Prakash*.

bourhood of Kalanaur and Batala. No religious restrictions were imposed on them and they were allowed full freedom to shout their call to prayer-*bang*—and say their prayers—*namaz*—and recite the *khutba* in the Sikh army. This was reported to Emperor Bahadur Shah on 28 April 1711 and on 20 May 1711.

On 4 June 1711 a battle was fought near Bahrampur, where the faujdar of Jammu was defeated. The towns of Raipur and Bahrampur were overrun by the Sikhs. Kalanaur and Batala were the next to fall. But the occupation of these places was only temporary, as Banda Singh was pursued by the imperial generals, Muhammad Amin Khan and Rustamidil Khan, and he had again and again to retire towards Jammu. The Sikhs could not be caught, but many persons were seized on the wrongful accusation of being Sikhs, and were given over to the Mughal soldiers in lieu of pay. They were sold in the horse market (*nakhās*) at Lahore.³¹ The Sikhs and their supporters in the central districts were also subjected to indignities and harassments. An imperial order was issued enjoining upon government officials to kill Sikhs wherever found.³² The result was indiscriminate persecution, including slaughter, of the Sikhs and their sympathisers. In order that Hindus might not suffer along with them, the emperor republished his royal farman ordering all Hindus to shave off their beards, and thus to distinguish themselves from the Sikhs³³ who, according to the historian Ghulam Husain, would never—not even under pain of death—cut or shave their beards or whiskers or any hair whatever of their bodies.

Bahadur Shah died on 27 February 1712 and was succeeded by his effeminate son, Jahandar Shah, who was ousted by Farrukh-sivar in the beginning of 1713. The period of internecine struggles offered a favourable opportunity to Banda Singh to re-establish his power and recapture the lost territories. He shot across the Punjab with the speed of a comet, and took Sadaura and Lohgarh which once again became his capital. Farrukh-sivar appointed Abdus Samad Khan as governor of Lahore and his son, Zakariya Khan, as faujdar of Jammu, with orders to expel the Sikh leader. The Sikhs were obliged to evacuate Sadaura and Lohgarh in October 1713. Banda Singh took refuge in the Jammu hills, where he made a settlement of his own, now called *Dera Baba Banda Singh*.³⁴ Abdus Samad Khan and his son received honours from the emperor on their initial victories

³¹ *Later Mughals*, I, 119.

³² *Tārikh-i-Muhammad Shāhī*, 224a.

³³ *Dastūr-ul-Inshā*, 9b. *Ruq'at-l-Amān-ud-daulah*, letter 5.

³⁴ The *Dera*, where his descendants live, is situated on the left bank of the Chenab, about 28 miles north-west of Jammu, 14 miles south-west of Katra, and 7 miles south of Riasi.

over the Sikhs, who began again to be hunted down everywhere, especially by the Pathans of the Gurdaspur region.

LAST STAND AT GURDAS-NANGAL

In the beginning of 1715 Banda Singh reappeared in the plains. He marched towards Kalanaur and Batala, which he took after some hard fighting and placed in the hands of Sikh officials. This roused the ire of Farrukh-siyar who sharply rebuked Abdus Samad Khan for his negligence. Orders were issued to a number of Mughal and Hindu officials and chiefs to proceed with their troops to reinforce the armies of Lahore. These were further supported by the Katauch raja of Kangra and Har Dev, son of Dhruv Dev, the raja of Jasrota. Before Banda Singh could dig in at some safe place to face the combined onslaught, the forces of Abdus Samad Khan were on him. He, however, stood his ground very well to the amazement of all, and in the first encounter fought so heroically that, according to Ghulam Husain, 'he was very near giving a complete defeat to the imperial generals'. But in the absence of a strong position for defence he was obliged to retreat and was brought to bay at the village of Gurdas-Nangal,³⁵ about four miles to the west of Gurdaspur.

Here Banda Singh put his men in the enclosure of Bhai Duni Chand, and threw up improvised defences around it. A moat was dug and filled with water from a neighbouring canal, and an artificial quagmire was created about it to keep off the enemy. Here the Sikhs sat down to stand the siege, which became so close that 'not a blade of grass, or a grain or corn, could find its way in'. Muhammad Qasim, the author of *Ibrat-nāmā*, who was an eye-witness of these operations, writes: "The brave and daring deeds of the infernal Sikhs were wonderful. Twice or thrice a day, some forty or fifty of these black-faced people would come out of their enclosure to gather grass for their animals, and when the combined forces of the imperialists went to oppose them, they made an end of the Mughals with arrows, muskets and small swords, and disappeared. Such was the terror of these people and the fear of the sorceries of their chief that the commanders of the royal army prayed that God might so ordain things that Banda Singh should seek his safety in flight from the *garhi*".³⁶

The besiegers' strategy was to starve out the Sikhs. Their provisions were soon exhausted, and the besieged began to suffer extremes of hunger. Conditions were further worsened by a dispute between

³⁵ The actual site of this village is marked by a big heap of ruins known as *Bande Valt Theh*, lying at a distance of about a mile from the present village of Gurdas-Nangal.

³⁶ *Ibratnāma*, 42.

Banda Singh and Binod Singh about their future plans. Binod Singh was of the opinion that they should evacuate the *garhi* by cutting through the enemy's lines, but Banda Singh was for staying where they were. After an exchange of hot words Binod Singh rode out of the enclosure. He fought his way through the besiegers and was off in all instant.³⁷

The differences in the camp ceased, but the situation remained as desperate as ever. In the absence of grain, flesh of horses, asses and other animals was used as food. "Also as the Sikhs were not strict observers of caste", says Irvine on the authority of Khafi Khan, "they slaughtered oxen and other animals, and not having any firewood ate the flesh raw. Many died of dysentery and privation . . When all the grass was gone, they gathered leaves from trees. When these were consumed, they stripped the bark and broke off the small shoots, dried them, ground them down, and used them instead of flour, thus keeping body and soul together. They also collected the bones of animals and used them in the same way. Some assert that they saw a few of the Sikhs cut flesh from their own thighs, roast it, and eat it."³⁸ Kamwar says, "In spite of all this the infernal Sikh chief and his men withstood all the military force that the great Mughal empire could muster against them for eight long months"³⁹ But how long could this continue? About 8000 had died, and the remaining fighters were reduced to mere skeletons. No further resistance was possible.

The imperialists forced their entry into the *garhi* on 17 December 1715: Banda Singh and his famished followers were taken prisoners. Some 200 to 300 of them were bound hand-and-foot and made over to the Mughal and Tartar soldiery, who 'put them to the sword and filled that extensive plain with blood as if it had been a dish'. The dead bodies of the Sikhs were ripped open in search of gold coins, which were supposed to have been swallowed by them and their heads were stuffed with hay and mounted on spears.⁴⁰

EXECUTION OF BANDA SINGH

From Gurdas-Nangal Abdus Samad Khan took Banda Singh and his companions to Lahore, where they were ignominiously paraded in the streets, and then despatched to Delhi. Although Banda Singh was a prisoner, living at the mercy of his captors, yet so great was the dread of his occult powers that it was feared that he might fly away from

³⁷ Sarup Chand, *Mahma Prakash*, Karam Singh, *Banda Bahadur*.

³⁸ *Later Mughals*, I, 315. *Muntakhab-ul-Lubab*, II, 703.

³⁹ *Tazkirat-us-Salatin*.

⁴⁰ *Tazkirat-us-Salatin*, 178a-179b. Khafi Khan, II, 736-85. Harpal, *Ibrahīmdāra*, 45a. Irvine, I, 315.

their hands. He was bound in chains in four parts of his body and kept in a cage. A Mughal officer was tied to him on the same elephant with orders to plunge his dagger into him if he tried to escape. His companions, about 200 in all, were also in chains. Zakariya Khan, who was in charge of the show, thought that the number of prisoners was too small to be presented to the emperor. So he roped⁴¹ a few thousand more from villages on the way, until the number of the prisoners rose to 740, and that of the heads hoisted on spears to 2000. Besides these, 700 cart-loads of heads also accompanied the show.

The whole concourse moved slowly towards Delhi, where it reached on 29 February 1716. Banda Singh and the other Sikh prisoners were conducted in a procession through the main streets of the capital. The ceremonial followed was the same as observed in the case of Sambhaji, the son of Shivaji. At the head of the procession were carried 2000 heads of Sikhs, raised on bamboo poles, their long hair streaming to the wind. Along with them, the body of a cat was hung at the end of a pole to show that every living creature, even down to the humble quadrupeds like cats, found in the enclosure of Gurdas-Nangal, had been destroyed. Then came Banda Singh, seated in an iron cage placed on the back of an elephant, and dressed, out of mockery, in a gold-embroidered red turban and a heavy robe of scarlet brocade worked in with pomegranate flowers in gold. Behind him stood, clad in chain armour, with a drawn sword in hand, one of the Turani officers of Muhammad Amin Khan. Then followed the other Sikh prisoners tied two and two on saddleless camels. On their heads were placed high fool's caps of ridiculous shape, made of sheep-skin and adorned with glass-beads. One hand of each man was attached to his neck by two pieces of wood which were held together by iron pins.

The road from Agharabad to the Lahori gate of Delhi, a distance of several miles, was lined on both sides with troops and filled with jubilant crowds, who mocked at the grotesque appearance of the prisoners. Mirza Muhammad Harisi, the author of *Ibratnāma*, who was present in Delhi at the time, describes the scene as a *tamasha* and writes, "Such a crowd in the bazaars and lanes had rarely been seen. The Musalmans could hardly contain themselves for joy. But the unfortunate Sikhs, who had been reduced to this condition, were quite happy and contented with their lot. Not the slightest sign of dejection or humiliation was visible on their faces. In fact, most of them, as they passed along on their camels, seemed to be happy and cheerful, merrily singing their sacred hymns. If any one from the lane

called out to them that their own excesses had brought them where they were, they quickly retorted that it had been so willed by the Almighty, and that their capture and misfortune was in accordance with His will.”⁴²

On the arrival of the procession at the imperial fort Banda Singh and some of his leading associates were imprisoned at the Tripolia. The remaining Sikhs were handed over to the kotwal for execution.

The carnage began on 5 March 1716, opposite the Chabutra of the Kotwali in the Chandni Chowk. One hundred Sikhs were executed every day. Life was promised to anyone who would renounce his faith and become a Muhammadan, but ‘to the last’, say Surman and Stephenson, who were then in Delhi, ‘it has not been found that one apostatised from this new-formed religion’.⁴³ Irvine says, ‘All observers, Indian and European, unite in remarking on the wonderful patience and resolution with which these men underwent their fate. Their attachment and devotion to their leader were wonderful to behold. They had no fear of death; they called the executioner *Mukt* or the Deliverer; they cried out to him joyfully, ‘O *Mukt!* kill me first!... artificers were kept in attendance to sharpen the executioners’ swords.’⁴⁴ According to Ghulam Husain, ‘these people not only behaved firmly during the execution, but they would also dispute and wrangle with each other for priority in death, and they made interest with the executioner to obtain the preference’. For a whole week the work of butchery went on until all the prisoners were beheaded.⁴⁵

After this massacre there was a lull for three months, during which the lives of Banda Singh and his leading companions ‘were spared in hope to get an account of his treasure and of those that assisted him’.⁴⁶ Banda’s turn came on 9 June 1716, when he was taken out in a procession, along with his 26 companions, through the streets of the old city to the shrine of Khwajah Qutb-ud-din Bakhtiyar Kaki, near the Qutb Minar. There he was offered the usual choice between Islam and death. But ‘the chosen disciple of Guru Gobind Singh’,

⁴² Harisi, *Ibratnâma*, 53. For another account of the same scene by an eyewitness, see Sayid Muhammad’s *Tabsirat-un-Nâzirîn*, 187a. See also C. R. Wilson, *Early Annals of the English in Bengal*, II, xlivi.

⁴³ Letter dated 10 March, 1716, written by John Surman and Edward Stephenson, members of the British Embassy to the court of Farrukh-siyar, and addressed to the President and Governor of Fort William (Printed in J. T. Wheeler, *Early Records of British India*, 180, and C. R. Wilson, *Early Annals of the English in Bengal*, 96-98). See also *Haqiqat*, 15.

⁴⁴ *Later Mughals*, I, 318.

⁴⁵ Harisi, *Ibratnâma*, 53a. Kamwar, *Tazkira*, 179b. *Khâfi Khan*, II, 785.

⁴⁶ Letter of J. Surman and E. Stephenson, mentioned above.

as the *Tārīkh-i-Muzaffarī* calls him, preferred to die rather than abjure his faith. His baby son, Ajai Singh, was placed on his lap, and he was asked to kill him. He refused. The executioner then hacked the child to pieces, and dragging out his quivering heart thrust it into the mouth of Banda Singh, who stood unmoved like a statue, completely resigned to the will of God.⁴⁷ According to the *Siyār-ul-Mutak̄khirīn*, Muhammad Amin Khan, who was standing by, was so impressed by the noble bearing of Banda Singh, that he was impelled to say, "It is surprising that a man possessed of so much acuteness and nobility should have involved the world in so much misery and brought calamity upon himself." Banda Singh replied with the greatest composure, "Whenever corruption in men increases so as to outstep all bounds, then the Divine Avenger raises up a scourge like me to chastise the race so depraved, but afterwards He grants power to men like you to punish him in return."⁴⁸

The details of Banda Singh's execution are too horrible to relate. First of all he was deprived of his right eye, and then of his left. Then his hands and feet were cut off, his flesh was torn with red-hot pincers, and finally his head was chopped off. He remained calm and serene up to the last, 'glorying', says Elphinstone, in having been raised up by God to be the scourge to the iniquities and oppressions of the age.⁴⁹

ESTIMATE OF BANDA SINGH

Perhaps no other man has earned so much hatred from Persian writers of the day as Banda Singh. It is true that the revolution which he led against the Mughal power had been started much earlier by the Sikh Gurus, but it was he who for the first time effectively organized and used it as a political weapon to pull down the Mughal edifice and to give a foretaste of independence to the people. It is futile to expect any calm appraisal of Banda Singh's character from the contemporary writers who were either official reporters or proteges of the Mughal rulers. They depict him 'as one of the most sanguinary of monsters, the man whose actions, had infidels been the sufferers and a Mussalman the actor, they might not perhaps have thought unworthy of applause'.⁵⁰

Judging the man from a purely historical standpoint, he does not

⁴⁷ Harisi, *Ibratnāma*, 62b. Kamwar, *Tazkira*, 180a. Khafi Khan, II, 765-67. *Siyar* (Raymond), I, 91. *Tabāirat-un-Nazirīn*, 187a.

⁴⁸ *Siyar*, 403. Khafi Khan, II, 766-67.

⁴⁹ Elphinstone, *History of India*, 670. Harisi, *Ibratnāma*, 62b. Kamwar, *Tazkira*, 180a. Khafi Khan, II, 765-66. Irvine, *Later Mughals*, I, 319.

⁵⁰ Mill, *History of India*, II, 303.

appear to have been such a monster. Even to his enemies he seemed to reflect much acuteness and nobility in his features.⁵¹ He resembled his master Guru Gobind Singh in his looks.⁵² He had an olympian air which cowed down the recalcitrant and cheered up those who were friendly. All writers bear witness to his coolness of courage and dauntless bravery against odds.

How sagacious Guru Gobind Singh had been in choosing his political successor! From the day Banda Singh received baptism of the *Khalsa* at the hands of his master to the last day of his life when he was torn to pieces, he remained a staunch believer in the Guru's mission. His coins and his seal bore the names of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh as the source of his authority. He strictly followed the rules of Sikhs conduct, called *rahit*, never cutting his hair, or using tobacco or *halal* meat. In spite of the temptations offered to him by war, his unchallenged position, and his enemies' provocation and example, he remained pure and chaste.

His zeal for propagating religion was only equalled by his zeal for war. He converted a large number of Hindus and Muslims to the Sikh faith, but there is no evidence to show that he ever used force in doing so. It appears from a report⁵³ made to Bahadur Shah by an official newswriter that Banda Singh, during his stay at Kalanaur in April 1711, had assured the Muslims that they would not be interfered with in any way, and that all those who came to join his ranks would be duly paid. They would enjoy full religious liberty, including that of *namaz* and *azan*. As a result of this assurance 5000 Muslims enlisted themselves in his army, and the number—so says another report⁵⁴—went on increasing daily.

There is no doubt about Banda Singh's fervid adhesion to the doctrine of Guru Gobind Singh. The alleged differences between him and some of his companions really belonged to the period after his death. In his life-time there was hardly anything visible in his policy or behaviour that could be interpreted as schismatic. It is clear from his letters that he never arrogated to himself the title or position of a *Guru*. Rather he loved to be called *Banda* or the master's slave, and always asked the Sikhs to follow the injunctions of the great Guru.⁵⁵ It is true that he introduced a new slogan, *Fateh Darshan*, meaning

51 *Siyār*, 403 (Raymond, I, 91; Briggs, 79-80).

52 Muhammad Shafi Warid, *Mir'at-i-Waridat*

53 *Akhbār-i-Darbar-i-Mu'allā* (Jaipur), dated 21 Rabi-ul-Awwal, 5 Bahadur Shah (28 April 1711). Also see *Ruq'aat-i-Amīn-ud-doulah*, 3.

54 *Akhbār-i-Darbar-i-Mu'allā* (Jaipur), fragment, undated (18 Rabi-ul-Sani, 5 Bahadur Shah).

55 Kesar Singh, *Benevolent name*, 180.

'Victory to the Presence'; but it was only a war cry, and was not insisted on when it was pointed out to him that it might replace the usual Sikh salutation, *Wāhiguru-ji ki Fateh*. The other point of difference, which may have created some awkwardness at the time of interdining, was Banda Singh's strict vegetarianism. But this could not have created, any more than it does now, any serious split, as meat-eating is not essential in Sikhism and is not cooked and served in *Gurū-kā-Langar* or the Sikh community kitchen. There is another allegation, viz., Banda Singh disobeyed the instructions of Guru Gobind Singh's widow, Mata Sundari, who, in collusion with the Mughal authorities, called upon the Khalsa to dissociate themselves from him and his activities. But there is nothing in any contemporary record to support this story.

There is no doubt that all Sikhs were united under Banda Singh, and out of them he forged an instrument of justice for the poor and the down-trodden, and of severe chastisement for those who had been following the trade of oppression with impunity. He used to point out to his officials: "According to the Holy Granth, the best worship for a ruler is to be just... If you call yourselves the Sikhs of the Great Man (Guru Gobind Singh), do not do anything that is sinful, irreligious or unjust. Advance the cause of true Sikhism, and smite those who behave in an un-Sikh manner."⁵⁶ The measures adopted by him to execute justice and to punish the wrong-doers were often very severe; but those were very hard times, and nothing but such measures could have brought home to the irresponsible officials that wanton cruelty and oppression were not the best methods of administration.

The aim of Banda Singh was nothing short of the liberation of his country from the Mughal rule. That regime was as severe and unsympathetic as Afghan rule had been in the days of Guru Nanak who had described it as a rule of 'tigers' and 'hounds'. The sixth and the tenth Gurus had taught their disciples to fight in battle and to destroy the awe inspired by the Mughal despotism; but their objectives being always defensive they had withheld the temptation of acquiring territory, making prisoners or wresting wealth from the enemy. Banda Singh was the first among the Sikhs to think of founding a political *rāj*. He ousted the Mughal officials and supplanted them with his own men. He abolished the zamindari system and introduced peasant proprietorship. His victories made the people feel for the time being that a great leader had risen in

the land to avenge the wrongs of centuries and to set up a new order of things.

But the task proved too difficult for him. The Mughal *rāj* was deeply rooted, its power was not yet exhausted, and it was fortunate in having at the helm of affairs in the Punjab a strong man like Abdus Samad Khan, who mustered all the available forces and held the Sikhs in check. Banda Singh on his side, had no comparable resources. A dauntless spirit can do much, but it cannot do everything. It must be supplemented with material resources. But Banda Singh from the beginning was greatly handicapped in his respect. The movement he had started had, by its very success, so terrified the upper classes that they dared not come out openly to help him. Only the poor classes of Sikhs joined him, and their number was not very large. The general masses of Hindus kept themselves aloof. Many of their ruling chiefs, like Chhatrasal, Badan Singh and Udit Singh Bundelas, Churaman Jat, Gopal Singh Bhadauria, Bachan Singh Kachhwaha and the rajas of the Siwalik hills took active part against him, and allied themselves with the Mughals. All these causes combined to make Banda's success transitory.

But all the successes gained by him were not on the battlefield. There was a revolution effected in the minds of the people, of which history often fails to take note. A will was created in the ordinary masses to resist tyranny and live and die for a cause. The example set by Banda Singh and his companions in this respect was to serve them as a beacon-light in the darker days to come. The idea of an independent state—long dead—once again became a living aspiration, and although suppressed for the time being by relentless persecution, it went on working underground like a smouldering flame, and came out forty years later with a fuller effulgence.

DIFFERENCES

After the defeat and death of Banda Singh severe measures were taken not only to destroy the power of the Sikhs, but to extirpate the community as a whole. An edict⁵⁷ was issued by Farrukh-siyar directing that every Sikh falling into the hands of his officers should, on a refusal to embrace Islam, be put to the sword. A reward was also offered for the head of every Sikh. Such was the keen spirit that animated the persecution, such the success of the official exertions, that for a time it appeared that the boast of Farrukh-siyar that he would wipe out the name of the Sikhs from the land was going to be fulfilled. Hundreds of them were brought in from their

⁵⁷ Danishwar, *Miftāh-ul-Tawdīkh*, 398. Forster, *Travels*, 271. Malcolm, *Sketch*, 85.

villages and executed; thousands who had joined merely for the sake of booty cut off their hair and went back to the Hindu fold again. Besides these, there were some Sikhs who had not received the baptism of Guru Gobind Singh, nor did they feel encouraged to do so, as the adoption of the outward symbols meant courting death. Those, therefore, who believed in Sikhism but had not the courage to die for it went about without long hair. They were called *Khulasas* or irregulars, now known as *Sahajdharis* or slow-adopters. They believed in the same principles as the regular Sikhs, whom they helped with money and provisions in times of need, and whom they would join as baptized brethren as soon as they found themselves ready for sacrifice. The genuine Sikhs sought shelter in hilis and jungles, and for some time disappeared from the scene.

The first shock, however, was soon over, and the zeal of Mughal officials too seems to have gradually slackened a little. Abdus Samad Khan, growing old and having a number of other risings to suppress, could not give the same attention to the Sikhs as before. They slowly crept out of their hiding places and returned to their homes. The enforcement of the royal *farman* against them came to be confined to those who were suspected of having taken an active part in Banda Singh's campaign. All others left alone to pursue their peaceful callings.

With the return of the Sikhs to the plains their visits to the Gurdwaras⁵⁸ increased, particularly to the Durbar Sahib, Amritsar, where they assembled in large numbers on the occasions of Baisakhi (in April) and Diwali (in October). This created a new problem for them. Who was to guide the services and control the income and expenditure? Previously the ultimate authority had rested with the Guru. Guru Gobind Singh, however, had abolished the personal Guruship, and vested it in the Holy Granth; it was to be administered by the Khalsa. The Khalsa's authority had yet to take shape and become the *Panth*. Meanwhile the Sikhs were forced to fight for their very existence and were given no time to organize themselves on the lines laid down by the tenth Guru.

THE KHALSA

The two essential features of this central authority were that it was to be one and that it was to be exercised impersonally. Even in the time of the Gurus its unity was emphasized by the doctrine that all the Gurus were one spirit; but they had different bodies and seemed to receive personal homage. In order to make this homage

58 *Gurdwara* means "The Guru's abode, also, a Sikh temple of worship."

impersonal, 'the personality of the Guru was detached from the spirit of the Guruship, which was regarded as one, indivisible and continuous'. It was inculcated that the Guru, in essence, represented two things: The Word and the Guru on the one hand, and the Guru and the Sikhs on the other. The greatest respect began to be paid to the incorporated Word, even the Guru choosing for himself a seat lower than that of the Holy Scripture compiled by the fifth Guru. The Sikh congregations also acquired great sanctity, owing to the belief that the spirit of the Guru lived and moved among them. They began to assume higher and higher authority, until collectively the whole body, called the Panth, came to be regarded as an embodiment of the Guru. Guru Gobind Singh himself received baptism from the Sikhs initiated by him.

What the last Guru did was to separate the personal and the scriptural aspects of the Guruship. The one he gave to the Khalsa and the other to the Holy Granth. Both acquired the title of Guru, and were to be addressed as *Guru Granth* and *Guru Panth*. In practice the Sikh congregation would sit together, with the Holy Granth in their midst, and deliberating over questions of common interest would give their decisions in the form of resolutions, called *Gurmatta*. All Sikhs were expected to receive them as decisions of the Guru, and any attempt to contravene them was looked upon as an act of sacrilege. Such meetings of the whole people, called the *Sarbat Khalsa*, were to be held twice a year, on the occasions of Baisakhi and Diwali.

This was the picture⁵⁹ of the central Sikh authority as visualized by the staunch followers of Guru Gobind Singh, who came to be called the *Tat Khalsa*, to be distinguished from the followers of other denominations who held that the personal Guruship had not been abolished by Guru Gobind Singh, and that their allegiance was still due to their respective preceptors.

OTHER DENOMINATIONS

One such claimant to Guruship appeared at Anandpur, where Guru Gobind Singh had left an Udasi saint, Gurbakhsh by name, to look after the shrines there. Gulab Rai,⁶⁰ son of Suraj Mal (a brother of Guru Tegh Bahadur), set himself up as a Guru, and baptized Sikhs, called *Gulab-Raiya*, by the old rite of *charan pahul* which had been abolished by Guru Gobind Singh. He had purchased some

⁵⁹ This picture may be amplified by the study of the records left by some eminent Sikhs of those days. They are called *Rāhatnāmas*.

⁶⁰ *Prachin Panth Prakash*, 158-59.

land near Anandpur, and wanted to add to it by taking possession of the places sacred to the memory of the Gurus. He even sat on the *gaddi* of the tenth Guru. To this the Udasi saint objected, saying that the places belonged to the fraternity and could not pass into the possession of any individual. The trouble ended with the death of Gulab Rai, whose successors soon after followed him.

The *Gangu-Shahias* were the followers of one Gangu,⁶¹ who had been blessed by Guru Amar Das. The incumbent of the *gaddi* at that time was one Kharak Singh, who called the Sikh congregations 'widowed' because they had no one person to lead them. He himself wanted to be that person, and as a qualification exhibited some miracles. He quarrelled with the Khalsa on the question of baptism: he believed in charan pahul, and they in Guru Gobind Singh's ceremony. He was put down in a duel of miracles, and his prestige suffered a shock.

- The *Handalias*,⁶² later called *Niranjanias*, were another group led astray from the centre by their interested sympathy with the Muslim cause. Their original leader was Handal of Jandiala, a very devoted Sikh of the days of Guru Amar Das and his two successors. His grandson, Bidhi Chand, lowered himself in the public eye by taking to himself a Muslim woman as a mistress. In order to justify himself he corrupted the text of Guru Nanak's biography and introduced the fictitious story that the Guru too had done the same thing. Later on in the days of persecution the Handalias dissociated themselves from the Sikh movement, and declared themselves as an independent sect. They allied themselves with the enemies of the Sikhs and were responsible for much mischief.

Ajit Singh, who had been adopted by Mata Sundari, tried to make himself a Guru; but being disowned by her in time, his movement came to nothing.

From among the old orders, the *Minas*, *Dhirmalias* and *Ramraiyas* had been banned by Guru Gobind Singh, and therefore they remained ineffective like extinguished craters.

The *Udasis* alone functioned in the old way, because being unbaptized and unworldly they were safe from Mughal persecution. There being no clash with them in the matter of belief, they were found to be very useful as custodians of Sikh temples. In the darkest days of Sikh history, when the regular Sikhs were away from their

⁶¹ Macauliffe, II, 115-16. *Prachin Panth Prakash*, 164-65. *Surat Prakash*, Ras I, anna 54.

⁶² Macauliffe, *Introduction*, lxxx-lxxxiii; *Prachin Panth Prakash* 169-73.

homes or were engaged in fighting, these selfless monks kept the torch of Sikhism burning.

The baptized order of *Nirmala Sadhus* also remained safe, because their missionary activities were mostly confined to the Malwa tract, which was not much affected by the persecuting campaigns. They were at one with the Khalsa in the beliefs; only they did not marry.

The main clash was with those Sikhs who had come to be called *Bandeis*, because they apotheosized Banda Singh on account of his tragic end and believed that he had inherited the succession of Guruship from the last Guru. When the differences took a religious turn, they multiplied inordinately and became more and more emphatic. As the Khalsa was fond of blue colour, the Bandeis preferred red. The cry of *Fateh Darshan* began to clash with *Fateh Wahiguru-ji ki*. Vegetarianism was emphasized by one party, and meat-eating by the other. The author of the *Prachin Panth Prakash* says that the Bandeis claimed that they should have an equal share in the management of the Gurdwaras and the other affairs of the Panth. The Tat Khalsa were, however, not willing to recognize any schismatic divisions, they dismissed the Bandei claim as wholly inadmissible. Matters came to a head in 1720-21 but the Bandeis were unable to hold their ground. Most of them joined the Khalsa. Gradually the Bandeis assumed a quieter role and practically disappeared from history.

PERSECUTION AND REVENGE

The first use made of this newly-gained strength was to punish the quislings who had betrayed the Sikhs into the hands of the government officials and the petty tyrants who had taken possession of their homes and lands.⁶³ The Delhi government felt it necessary to place the Lahore administration in the hands of a strong man Abdus Samad Khan was transferred to Multan in 1726, and his more energetic son, Zakariva Khan, known as Khan Bahadur, was appointed to take his place.

The new governor, who had already taken a hand in fighting and suppressing the Sikhs, was not the man to let the grass grow under his feet. He adopted strong measures to root out the troublesome people once for all. He sent out roving columns in all directions to hunt out the Sikhs⁶⁴ and to bring them to book. Price was fixed on their heads. Every morning punitive parties would issue from Lahore, and combing out villages and forests would bring in batches of Sikhs in chains. They were tortured in different ways and beheaded in public. Their heads were piled up in the form of pyramids

⁶³ *Bansāvalī-nāma*, 147-48.

⁶⁴ *Chahār Gulshan-i-Punjab*, 109.

which the Sikhs called *Shahidganj* or 'treasure-troves of martyrdom'. In their search for security the Sikhs again retired into forests, and experienced extremes of hardship. They lived on roots and vegetables, calling them by most flattering names, e.g., crusts of onions were silver-pieces and parched grams almonds.

The Mughal government had driven the Sikhs beyond the pale of law, but the people did not abandon them. They extended to them as much support as was possible in the circumstances. The zamindars helped them in three ways: by protecting them, by providing them with means of living, and by concealing them in batches of twos and threes in their houses.⁶⁵ Even Lakhpur Rai, the Hindu diwan of Zakariya Khan, was in secret sympathy with them. He would always defend them before his master, or would try to palliate the rigour of the measures adopted against them.

The persecuted Sikhs were obliged by hunger and nakedness to seize food and clothing wherever found. There was no other alternative if they had to keep their body and soul together. Their depredation, however, were confined to the property owned by the government or its officials and allies. For some years the revenue collections did not reach the government treasury. Persian histories, and those who quote them nowadays, loosely use the word 'plunder' in connection with the operations of the Sikhs in those days, forgetting that such things are inevitable in war, especially in a war which is reduced to butchery by an organized government. Sikh writers vividly paint the circumstantial setting in which the Sikhs had to struggle for their very existence, and provide us with details of the so-called robbery. Gian Singh, for example, says that the Hindus were generally spared, and if by mistake any one's property was lifted, it was duly restored.⁶⁶ When the government's forces tried to punish the outlaws, they were unable to contact them, as the Sikhs did not live in houses or forts, but ran away to their rendezvous in forests or other places difficult of access.

POLICY OF CONCILIATION

Thus persecution and revenge went on for some years, until the Mughal government, tired of this method of dealing with the insurgents, tried to placate them. In 1733 Zakariya Khan represented his difficulties to the Delhi government, and suggested that a grant be made to the Sikhs and a title be conferred on their leader. The

⁶⁵ Ahmad Shah Batalia, *Zikr-i-Guruñ*, 13.

⁶⁶ Panth Prakash, 452-53.

proposal was accepted. The title of 'Nawab' along with a jagir, comprising the parganahs of Dipalpur, Kanganwal and Jhabal, of which the total income was about a hundred thousand rupees, was offered to several Sikh leaders, one after another, and refused. At last it was suggested that it should be given to some one noted for service. Kapur Singh of Faizullapur was selected for the honour. He accepted it, but not before it had been sanctified by the touch of five Khalsas' feet.⁶⁷

ORGANIZATION OF DALS

This gave some breathing time to the Sikhs, who began to re-inhabit their original homes. Their numbers also increased. But this spell of peace was not to last long. In giving them a jagir the government had expected that the Sikhs would beat their swords into ploughshares and live as peaceful and law-abiding citizens. But they had tasted of political liberty, and were only waiting for an opportunity to wrest power. They showed this by gathering under leaders and strengthening their organization.

There were two main divisions: one consisting of the veterans, many of whom had seen the days of Guru Gobind Singh. They were called the *Budha Dal* the 'Army of Elders' and were led by 'Nawab' Kapur Singh. The other, consisting of volunteers was called the *Tarunā Dal* or the 'Army of the Young'. It was soon found that the 'Army of the Young' was difficult to control in one place. So five centres were established for them at Ramsar Bibek-sar, Lachman-sar, Kaul-sar and Santokh-sar in different parts of Amritsar and they were asked to join any centre they liked. Each *tattha* had its own leader or leaders, its own drum and banner, and was composed of 1300 to 2000 men. All had a common store for clothing and other necessities. Nobody could go home without leave. Whatever was brought from outside was deposited in the common treasury.⁶⁸ Both the Dals were supervised and kept together by Nawab Kapur Singh, who was highly respected, both as a secular and a spiritual leader. It was considered very meritorious to receive baptism at his hands.

CLASHES WITH GOVERNMENT

The people of the *Budha Dal* were comparatively stationary but those of the *Tarunā Dal* were always on the move. They spread themselves out not only into the Bari Doab, but went further afield up to Hansi and Hisar. This renewed energy of the Sikhs alarmed the government and led to the confiscation of the jagir in 1735.

⁶⁷ Ratan Singh, 187-200.

⁶⁸ Ratan Singh, 200-1. Panth Prakash 507-11.

The Khalsa was again free to have it out with the government. Driven out of the Bari Doab by Lakhpur Rai, the diwan of Lahore, the *Budha Dal* came to Malwa, where it was welcomed by Ala Singh at his capital Barnala. The presence of the Dal proved a god-send for him; with its help he was able to extend his territory and annex the whole area of Sunam. After ravaging Sirhind and acquiring enough 'to pay their way back to Amritsar', as they called it, the forces of the *Budha Dal* returned to Majha. While stationed at Baserke, near Amritsar, they were attacked by an army of 7000 under the command of diwan Lakhpur Rai. They were defeated (probably in October 1736) and pushed away. The *Tarun Dal* hearing of their reverse hurried to their assistance. The combined forces inflicted a heavy defeat on the Mughal army near Hujra Shah Muqim. This success emboldened the Sikhs, and they overran the whole area bordering on Amritsar.

The government was again roused to action. The temple of Amritsar was taken into possession, and its approaches were picketed by troops to prevent the Sikhs from assembling in their sacred shrine. In addition to the moving columns sent round to haul up the Sikhs the chaudhuris of the surrounding parganahs were ordered to be on the look-out for them and to send them bound to Lahore. It was declared an offence to give shelter to a Sikh or to help him in any other way.

Thousands of Sikhs must have fallen as a result of these measures, but a few cold-blooded executions were so memorable that they entered into the daily prayer of the Sikhs. One such was that of Bhai Mani Singh, the most learned and revered Sikh of the time. He had received baptism from Guru Gobind Singh himself, and was occupying the high position of the *Granthi* in the Golden Temple. In 1734 he secured permission from the governor of Lahore to hold the *Diwali* festival in the temple, on the condition of paying 5000 rupees after the fair, which was to last for ten days. But the governor, under the pretext of keeping order, sent a force to Amritsar. The *mela* broke up at the approach of the army. Bhai Mani Singh was arrested for not paying the stipulated sum, and offered the usual alternative of Islam or death. He stoutly refused to barter away his religion. His body was cut to pieces limb by limb.⁶⁹

INVASION OF NADIR SHAH

As a result of these renewed persecutions most of the Sikhs left the plains and sought shelter in the Siwalik hills, the Lakhis Jungle

⁶⁹ Ratan Singh, 209-13.

and the sandy deserts of Rajputana. Sometimes, however, abnormal happenings in the country encouraged them to come out of their hiding-places and make their presence felt. One such occasion was the invasion of Nadir Shah.

On his way back to Persia in the summer of 1739, in order to avoid the heat of the plains and to have fresh fields for plunder, the invader took a northerly route under the Siwaliks until he came to Akhnur. The Sikhs who were passing their days in those hills thought it a good chance to replenish their resources, and falling upon his rear relieved him of much of his booty. Astonished at this, he called a halt at Lakhore, where he is said to have questioned Zakariya Khan about the whereabouts of the mischief-makers who had dared to interfere with his march. Zakariya Khan replied, "They are a group of fakirs who visit their Guru's tank twice a year, and after bathing in it disappear." Nadir Shah asked, "Where do they live?" "Their homes are their saddles", was the reply. The invader warned the governor saying, "Take care, the day is not distant when these rebels will take possession of thy country." This remark, hinting at the incapacity of Zakariya Khan, cut him to the quick and he resolved to launch an all-out campaign against the Sikhs.⁷⁰

FURTHER PERSECUTION

The previous orders to the local officials were repeated with greater emphasis, and rewards were offered for the capture and destruction of the Sikhs. Ten rupees would be paid to anyone giving information which would lead to the arrest of a Sikh, and fifty for bringing his head. Even relations of the doomed people were not spared. It was declared lawful to plunder their houses and to seize their property.⁷¹ The whole machinery of the government, including chaudhuris, muqaddams and other official agents, was put into motion to crush the Sikhs. Even non-official zamindars were made to lend a hand in this business. The Sikhs knew how to hit back in some cases retaliation was prompt and severe. For example, chaudhuri Massa Ranghar of Mandikai, who desecrated the temple of Amritsar, was killed by Mehtab Singh of Mirankot.

Many stories of desperate courage and adventure are narrated in Sikh chronicles. Some of the daring Sikhs were caught and punished. Mehtab Singh was publicly broken on the wheel at Lahore. But usually the desperate people remained out of the reach of the government, and it wreaked its wrath on gentle and harmless Sikhs.

⁷⁰ Forster, *Travels*, I, 272. Malcolm Sketch, 86. Ratan Singh, 215-18. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *Zkr-i-Guruon*, 13. *Tarikh-i-Hind*, 857.

⁷¹ Ratan Singh, 218-19

Bhai Taru Singh, a young Sikh, very pious and devoted to the service of the community, used to offer the produce of his land to his brethren who had been driven into the wilderness. This was considered treason. He was betrayed and brought to Lahore in June 1745. He was asked to embrace Islam and to cut off his hair. He refused. Zakariya Khan then ordered his hair to be scraped off his scalp. After a few days' torture he died.⁷²

LAKHPAT RAI AND SIKHS

Zakariya Khan died in 1745. His son and successor, Yahiya Khan, was as relentless as his father, and in addition had the cruelty of a coward. He confirmed Lakhpot Rai in his post of diwan. This Hindu minister had some sympathy for the Sikhs in the beginning; but as he could maintain his position and influence with the government only by identifying himself whole-heartedly with its policy, he became an active opponent of the Sikhs. His brother, Jaspat Rai, the faujdar of Eminabad, was at one with him. In 1746 he was killed in an engagement with the Sikhs. Lakhpot Rai was mad-dened with rage when he heard the news of his brother's death. He declared that he would 'erase' the name of the Sikhs 'from the page of existence'.⁷³

To begin with, all the Sikhs living in Lahore were arrested and made over to sweepers for execution in March 1746. A deputation of Hindu leaders waited upon Lakhpot Rai to dissuade him from spilling innocent blood but he would not listen to them, and the terrible order was executed. It was announced with the beat of drum that no one should read the Sikh scriptures, and anyone taking the name of the Guru would be arrested and his belly ripped open. Even the word *gur* ('molasses), which sounded like *Guru*, was not to be uttered, but the word *rori* was to be used instead. The word *Granth* was also to be replaced with *pothi*.⁷⁴ Many volumes of the Holy Granth were collected and thrown into rivers and wells. The tank of the Amritsar temple was filled up with earth.

FIRST GHAIUGHARA

A huge army, consisting of Mughal troops and auxiliaries drawn from all over the country, marched against the Sikhs under the personal command of Yahiya Khan and Lakhpot Rai. The Sikhs,

72 Ratan Singh, 254-58, 287-88. Kesar Singh, 152. Khushwaqt Rai, 45ab. A' ud-din, 211. Sohan Lal, 108-9.

73 Ratan Singh, 291-98. Ali-ud-din, 229-31. Khushwaqt Rai, 47. Cf. Chahar Gulshan-i-Panjab, 169.

74 Ratan Singh, 293-94. Panth Prakash, 519.

about 15,000 in number, were driven across the Ravi towards the hills of Basohli where they expected the Hindu population to shelter them. But they were soon disillusioned to find that orders had already reached the Hindus from Lahore not to give any quarter to them. The Sikhs were received with showers of bullets and stones, and were obliged to halt. The situation was desperate. They had a steep mountain in front, a hostile population pouring death on them, a flooded river to the right, and the enemy in hot pursuit behind. They had no food, no ammunition, and their horses too being weak, were tumbling into mountain-clefts and ravines.

They decided to retrace their steps and go to Majha; but the Ravi being in spate was unfordable. Seeing no escape, the leaders resolved that those who were on foot should try their luck in the mountains, and others who had horses should cut their way through the enemy. Those who went to the mountains spent about six months in different parts of Mandi and Kulu, where they had to contend with great hardships, and then they rejoined the Khalsa at Kiratpur. The main body rushed upon the pursuing troops, but were surrounded and cut down in hundreds. Some were taken prisoner. The remaining Sikhs were pursued into a jungle where they were again attacked not only by the army, but also by the common folk collected for the purpose from the neighbouring villages. The Sikhs found an easy prey in these impromptu soldiers, and were able to relieve many of them of their horses and arms (June 1746).

The Sikhs, who were about 2000 strong, now got some respite to cross the Ravi and enter the Riarki part of Gurdaspur. Hearing that Lakhpat Rai was continuing his pursuit they made straight for the Sutlej. They forded it at Aliwal, and entered Malwa. Lakhpat Rai had had enough of fighting, and returned to Lahore. In this campaign he must have killed at least 7000 Sikhs and taken 3000 prisoners. They were taken to Lahore where they were butchered. It was the first time that the Sikhs had suffered so much loss in a single campaign. It was called the first *ghalughara*⁷⁵ or holocaust, to be distinguished from the second and the bigger one which occurred in 1762.

FIRST INVASION OF ABDALI

Lakhpat Rai's revenge was complete, but he was not destined to enjoy his triumph long. His power came to an end with that of his master in March 1747, when, after a civil war of about five months, Yahiya Khan was ousted by his younger brother, Shah Nawaz Khan.

75 Ratan Singh, 296-308. Ali-ud-din, 229-31. Cf. Kanhiya Lal, Punjab, 69.

the governor of Multan. Shah Nawaz interned his brother, and threw Lakhpat Rai into prison. He took for his diwan Kaura Mal, who was a Sikh of the Khulasa or Sahajdhari order. The policy of persecution continued, but with much reduced vigour on account of the changed circumstances. The Delhi government, guided by the wazir Qamr-ud-din, the father-in-law of Yahiya Khan, considered Shah Nawaz as a usurper and would not grant him the *sanad* of the governorship of Lahore. The latter intrigued with Ahmad Shah Durrani. Alarmed by this new turn of events the wazir sent the belated confirmation to Shah Nawaz. Assured of his position at Lahore, the new governor sent away one of the Abdali's envoys with a rude rebuff, and poured molten lead into the mouth of another. But it was too late. The Abdali came pushing in, reaching Lahore on 12 January 1748. Shah Nawaz fled away to Delhi. Ahmad Shah appointed a new governor at Lahore and restored Lakhpat Rai to the position of diwan. But this arrangement proved very short-lived, as the Abdali was defeated by the Mughals in the battle of Manupur, near Sirhind, in March 1748, and the governorship of Lahore and Multan fell into the hands of Mir Mannu, the son of the wazir who lost his life in that battle.

REVIVAL OF SIKH OFFENSIVE

The Sikhs took full advantage of the confusion reigning in Delhi and Lahore. The Delhi government was utterly weak. The imperial court was torn by the mutual jealousies and dissensions of the leading nobles, who were more anxious to pull down the power of their rivals than to strengthen the weakening fabric of the state. The growing paralysis of the central authority led to the loss of provinces and invited incursions from the north-west. Nadir Shah had exposed this weakness, and Ahmad Shah Durrani, though defeated, had disorganized the administrative machinery in the Punjab, which had already been shaken by the internecine quarrels of Zakariya Khan's sons.

This gave a chance to the Sikhs to emerge from their hideouts. A band of them under Charat Singh Sukarchakia made several surprise attacks on the fleeing followers of the Durrani, and pursuing them up to the Indus carried away a number of horses and other property.⁷⁶ Another group, which had been wandering in the mountains after the disastrous encounter with Lakhpat Rai, came down and moved under Jassa Singh Ahluwalia towards Amritsar. Brushing aside the

half-hearted opposition of Adina Beg,⁷⁷ the *faujdar* of Jullundur, who met them near Hoshiarpur, they pushed on to Amritsar. There they found Salabat Khan, the officer-in-charge of the city, ready with a force to check their entry. They fell upon him, and killing him in action took possession of the town and a large part of the district.⁷⁸

NEW ORGANIZATION

This proved a landmark in the history of the Sikhs, not because it was an occasion of great victory, but because it ushered in a new era, in which the Sikhs knit their scattered bands into a more homogeneous organization, and provided it with a local habitation in the form of a fort. The idea of *Panth* had taken a definite shape, and had gathered round it a compelling tradition of implicit obedience to a common leader and a sense of responsibility in the units and individuals to the Panthic whole. The organization, which had so far worked on a small scale and had been scattered by the incessant blows of the enemy, now assumed larger proportions. While there had been only a few leaders before, now there were scores of them, all requiring to be bound together in a closer union. They gathered with their followers in large numbers at Amritsar on the day of *Baisakhi*, 29 March 1748, and discussed the Panthic situation. At the suggestion of 'Nawab' Kapur Singh, who was then growing old, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia was chosen supreme commander of the *Dal Khalsa*,⁷⁹ which was reorganized and declared to be a state.

The feeling of the new leader was that the Sikhs could no longer trust their safety to bushes and caves; they must provide themselves with a regular fort, which should not only serve as a base of military operations, but also lend security to their central shrine. They selected a piece of land near Ramsar, about a mile to the south of the Golden Temple, and on it threw up a small enclosure (*rauni*) of mud walls, with watch-towers at the corners and a moat running round it. It could accommodate about 500 men. It was called Ram Rauni, after the name of Guru Ram Das, the founder of the city. The whole work of construction was carried out by the Sikhs themselves, the leaders taking the most prominent part in this labour of love.

The leading Sikhs began to extend their rule over different parts

⁷⁷ Adina Beg had never been very vigorous in suppressing the Sikhs. His policy was dictated by a fear that if he finished off the Sikh trouble completely, there would be left no need of such an artful man in Mughal service (Sohan Lal, 109, Browne, *Tracts*, II, 14).

⁷⁸ Griffin, *Rajas of the Punjab*, 500-1. Latif, *Punjab*, 315.

⁷⁹ *Panth Prakash*, 907.

of the Central Punjab Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, Hari Singh, Karora Singh, Jhanda Singh and others, with five to six thousand horsemen, established themselves in the Bari Doab Bagh Singh Hallowalia with his nephew Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, and Jassa Singh Ichogillia took possession of a large part of the Jullundur Doab Charat Singh Sukachakia spread his power over the Rachna Doab, with his headquarters at Gujranwala, where he built a fort⁸⁰ All adventurous people, and others who were sick of Mughal misrule, began to flock under the banner of one or other of these Sardars.

MIR MANNU AND THE SIKHS

These activities of the Sikhs, threatening the integrity of the Mughal state, could not pass unnoticed by Mir Mannu, the new governor, who got his appointment in April 1748. Lakhpat Rai would have proved a useful hand in the business of Sikh-baiting, but being a protege of the Duranis invader he could no longer be trusted. He was thrown into prison and heavily fined.⁸¹ His place as chief minister was given to Dina Kaura Mal Adina Beg was confirmed in his government of Bist Jullundur. These officials were not very eager to take action against the Sikhs. The former was secretly a Sikh and the latter had always followed a kid glove policy towards them. There were other reasons too for the delay in starting a campaign against the Sikhs. The governor himself had other difficulties. He had entered Lahore with less than 2000 cavalry and a small number of other troops. He had to raise a strong army to meet his increasing needs. Zahid Khan, whom the Duranis had left at Multan had to be ousted before Mir Mannu could take possession of that province. Kaura Mal led an expedition and fought a battle at Mati Lal defeating and driving away the recalcitrant Afghan. Then he was sent to Jammu to suppress the rebellion of the hill chiefs who were made to accept the suzerainty of the Lahore government. Despite these successes the fear of an Afghan invasion from the west and of the intrigues of Satdai Jang at Delhi kept the nerves of Mir Mannu high strung.

It was only when he had felt himself well-settled in his seat as governor, that he turned his attention to the Sikhs. He ordered Adina Beg to round them up in his territory. Adina Beg as usual began to make conciliatory gestures and invited Jassa Singh Ahluwalia to a conference. He proposed that the Sikhs should either agree to rule the country along with him, or to accept a separate territory, for which a grant could be secured from Lahore and ratified by the emperor.

⁸⁰ Sohan Lal 127 ²⁸ Bakht Mal 32 Cf Budh Singh 26

⁸¹ Khushwant Singh 53 Tahmasraama 72 Ratn Singh 310

This would prevent much unnecessary bloodshed on both sides. Jassa Singh replied that there could be no meeting between parties differing so much in their outlook and aims. The Sikhs wanted to wrest power with the sword as the Mughals had done earlier. Their meeting could take place only on the battlefield. As to the avoidance of bloodshed he pointed out that freedom had never been won peacefully. The Khalsa must rule, as ordained by God, and not as a fief-holder from a foreigner.⁸²

Failing in his negotiations with the head of the Khalsa *Dal*, Adina Beg turned to the smaller try. He was able to rope in Jassa Singh of Ichogil, later on called Jassa Singh Ramgarhia. This man had been ostracised by the community for the alleged murder of his infant daughter.⁸³ He went off in a buff and readily agreed to serve under Adina Beg. All the while his conscience smote him for having deserted his brethren, and he was ever on the look out for a chance to go back to them. His opportunity came in the siege of Ram Rauni.

After the rainy season when the Sikhs gathered in large numbers to celebrate the *Diwali* festival at Amritsar, Mir Mannu thought that he could deliver a heavy blow. He marched with a force and besieged the fort of Ram Rauni. Adina Beg joined him. The siege went on for about three months, from October to December 1748. There was great scarcity of food and fodder, and the besieged were obliged to resort to many shifts to replenish their resources. In their extreme distress the besieged decided to rush out and die fighting. In this crisis Jassa Singh Ichoglia came in with a hundred followers.⁸⁴ Just at this time an incident occurred which obliged the Mughals to raise the siege and to leave the Sikhs to themselves.

SECOND INVASION OF DURRANI

Ahmad Shah Durrani entered the Punjab for the second time in December 1748, nine months after his first invasion. Kaura Mal advised Mir Mannu to stop the hostilities against the Sikhs, and to march his forces against the invader, while he himself undertook to lead an expedition against the usurper at Multan. Mir Mannu appealed for reinforcements to the Delhi government, which, however, being guided by the wazir Safdar Jang, the enemy of Mir Mannu, was not in a mood to afford any help. So he had to meet the Afghan invasion with

⁸² Jassa Singh Bland 43-44.

⁸³ Among the Sikhs infanticide is a taboo, for which the punishment is excommunication.

⁸⁴ Ratan Singh 911-15 Khushwant Rai, 53 Sohan Lal 129

his own resources, supplemented by those of Adina Beg and Mehdi Ali Khan of Sialkot.

The Abdali divided his army into two sections. One under his own command kept Mir Mannu engaged on the left bank of the Chenab, and the other was sent under his general Jahan Khan to ravage the country up to Lahore. In the confusion 'Nawab' Kapur Singh appeared suddenly at the head of 20 horsemen and had the pleasure of sitting on the platform of the *kotwali*.⁸⁵ We are told by Ali-ud-din that the Sikhs during the absence of Mir Mannu from Lahore ravaged and burnt the outskirts of the city.⁸⁶

After making an unsuccessful attempt to force his way into Lahore, Jahan Khan returned to his master. Ahmad Shah and Mir Mannu had been waiting opposite each other for about two months without fighting any decisive battle. They came to terms. The Shah agreed to go back on two conditions. the territory lying to the west of the Indus would form a part of his dominions, and the revenues of *Chahar Mahal* (the four districts, Sialkot, Aurangabad, Gujarat and Pasrur, assessed at 14 lakhs a year) would be paid to him, as they had been assigned to Nadir Shah in 1739.⁸⁷ Under this agreement Mir Mannu became a sort of tributary to the Afghan king; the Punjab virtually passed out of the control of Delhi.

After the Abdali's departure Mir Mannu engaged himself in resisting Safdar Jang's attempts to undermine his power. The wazir had got Shah Nawaz Khan appointed as governor of Multan, independent of Lahore, which meant the reduction of Mir Mannu's administrative charge to a half. Shah Nawaz was further encouraged to work for dislodging Mir Mannu even from the governorship of Lahore. He reached Multan with an army of 15,000 horse and foot, and wrote to Mir Mannu asking for permission to visit his father's tomb at Lahore. Mir Mannu saw through the game and prepared himself for war. The situation called for conciliation of the Sikhs. On the advice of Kaura Mal he made peace with them allowing them to retain their fort Ram Rauni⁸⁸ and granting them a *jaris* of 12 villages from the area of Patti and Shahal, worth a lakh and a quarter.⁸⁹

After conciliating the Sikhs Mir Mannu despatched Kaura Mal to Multan with an army, including some forces of Adina Beg and

⁸⁵ *Shahname-i-Ahmadi* 114 118 Sohan Lal, 129 Khushwant Rai 52.

⁸⁶ *Treatyname* 241

⁸⁷ *Shahname-i-Ahmadi* 125-27 *Bauān-i-Waqā'i* 148 A' 1 Jin 241

⁸⁸ Henceforth Ram Rauni came to be known as Ram Gorkh

⁸⁹ *Ihsānname*, 241 Ratan Singh 915 *Shanisir Khalsa* 112

Khwajah Ibrahim Khan, with a newly recruited contingent of Sikhs under the command of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia. The latter were paid at the rate of eight annas per day to a footman, one rupee to a horseman, and five rupees to an officer; they were also allowed to retain whatever was got in booty. Shah Nawaz came out to meet this army. He was defeated and killed. Mir Mannu was highly pleased with this victory, and heaped honours on his successful deputy. He conferred on him the title of *Maharaja Bahadur*, and appointed him governor of Multan on his own behalf.⁹⁰

The Sikhs also were pleased with their friend, Kaura Mal, whom they began to call *Mittha Mal*.⁹¹ With a generous monetary offering from him the holy tank at Amritsar, which had been filled up by the orders of Lakhpat Rai, was dug up and cleaned. He also spent 3 lakhs on the construction of a tank and the temple Bal-Leela in Nankana Sahib.⁹²

A period of peace seems to have dawned on the Sikhs. For about a year and a half they were left to themselves. They spent the time in recouping their strength and consolidating their organization. Sikhism being no longer an invitation for death, but an opening for a safe and promising career, it attracted many of the oppressed peasantry and the down-trodden menials. The number of the baptized Khalsa increased, and they enlisted themselves under different sardars of the *Dal*.

THIRD INVASION OF DURRANI

This spell of peace, however, soon came to an end, when the news reached India that the Durrani was coming down for the third time. His complaint was that no regular payment was made to him of the tribute due from Lahore. He had sent his agent, Sukh Jiwan, towards the end of 1750 but Mir Mannu had played him off with a small amount. Now Harun Khan was sent for the same purpose. He reached Lahore in October 1751, and demanded the payment of 24 lakhs as arrears. Mir Mannu offered only one year's tribute; if that was not acceptable, the issue could be decided by the sword.⁹³

Mir Mannu, who was already independent of Delhi, wanted to strike a blow for freeing himself from the authority of Kabul. He put forth a strong army to fight the invader, and in this he relied chiefly on

90 *Tarikh-i-Ahmad Shahi*, 23-24. *Tarikh-i-Muraffai*, 447. *Ab ud din*, 238. Ratan Singh, 318-17. Sohan Lal, 129, 181.

91 *Kaura* in Punjabi means bitter; *mittha* means sweet.

92 *Shamshir Khalsa*, 111-12. Ramjas, *Twarikh-i-Riāsat Kapurthala*, 148.

93 SPD (Persian Miscellaneous Papers), 4-5. *Tarikh-i-Ahmad Shahi*, 29a. Sohan Lal, I, 132-38.

dewan Kaura Mal. The latter was able to enlist for him as many as 20,000 Sikhs, on the promise that after the invader had been driven away the Sikhs would be permitted to occupy the hilly tracts of Parol, Kathuha, Basohli and the surrounding *doons* or valleys. With Sangat Singh and Sukha Singh as their leaders they moved to the gates of the Lahore city; the city itself was left to the charge of Ivaz Khan, the deputy governor.

The Abdali arrived near Wazirabad in December 1751. Jahan Khan, the Afghan general, came up with his roving parties, and some petty skirmishes took place with Mir Mannu's forces. In one of these Sukha Singh was killed.

In January 1752 the Durrani suddenly appeared near the Shalamar Gardens of Lahore. On 6 March Mir Mannu fell upon him there and suffered defeat. Kaura Mal was killed by a shot fired by an agent of Adina Beg. Sangat Singh, the leader of the Sikh contingent, was also killed.⁹⁴ The city was surrounded, and its suburbs plundered.

As Mir Mannu was still unwilling to submit, the Durrani wrote to him that he had only to settle his account with the Hindu Kaura Mal, who had been killed. There was now no cause left for them to shed Muslim blood. Peace could be made if Mir Mannu would pay up the money asked for. Mir Mannu agreed to appear before the victor and offer his submission. The Durrani was pleased with the fearless bearing of his brave adversary, and expressed his admiration for his courage and fortitude. He called him his own son, and granted him the title of *Farzand Khan Bahadur* with a robe of honour and other presents. Adina Beg, who had been scheming for obtaining the governorship of Lahore for himself, was put under surveillance for a while, and Mir Mannu was reinstated as viceroy of Lahore and Multan on behalf of the Afghan ruler. This alienation of territory was ratified by the emperor of Delhi in April. Thus did these provinces definitely go out of the Mughal hands and become a part of the Afghan empire. Thirty lakhs of rupees were to be paid by Mir Mannu to the Abdali. About the same time the latter deputed Abdulla Khan Ishaq Aghasi, along with Sukh Jiwan, to reduce Kashmir. This north-western province was to be wrested from the nominee of the ruler of Delhi and added to the Afghan empire.⁹⁵

PERSECUTION RENEWED

Feeling secure against any intrusion from either Kabul or Delhi Mir Mannu began to concert measures to remove the causes of disturbance

⁹⁴ Ratan Singh, 280-21.

⁹⁵ Tārikh-i-Ahmad Shahī 31 Tahmidīnād 16-17 Khushwaqt Rūf, 58 Tārikh '145 225, 227, Kirpa Ram, Gulzor-i-Kashmir, 232.

inside the Punjab. He no longer required the help of the Sikhs; their last link with the government had snapped with the death of Kaura Mal. So Mir Mannu resumed his old attitude towards them, and resumed the *jagir*⁹⁶ which they had been enjoying since 1749. The Sikhs too returned to their old ways and began to bid for independence. They overran the Bari and Jullundur Doabs, inflicting heavy losses on the bigoted *saiyids* and *pirzadas*,⁹⁷ who had been responsible for the persecution of the Sikhs. Then they crossed the Sutlej and ravaging the territories of Sirhind, Thaneswar and Jind came into conflict, in December 1752, with Kamgar Khan, the governor of Sonepat and Panipat, who checked their advance and pushed them back.⁹⁸ About the same time, another force of the Sikhs, under Charhat Singh Sukurchakia, made its way northward beyond the Jhelum and reduced¹ the whole area up to Saiyyad Kasran. Muqarrab Khan, the Gakkhar chief of Gujarat, was forced to yield his possessions beyond the Chenab.⁹⁹

The rising power of the Sikhs provoked Mir Mannu to take vigorous measures against them. In March 1753, when a great concourse of Sikhs had gathered at Makhowal, called Anandpur, to celebrate the annual spring festival, Adina Beg fell upon them unawares and put many of them to death. After Adina Beg's return another force under Mir Momin Khan was sent towards the Lakhji jungle where the Sikhs were reported to have taken shelter. As his troops could not face the guerilla tactics of the Sikhs he was recalled. Another force was sent under Husain Khan who succeeded in defeating the Sikhs.¹⁰⁰ But they escaped to the northern parts of the Bari Doab and plundered the unguarded towns. An expedition led by Mir Mannu personally could not improve the situation,¹⁰¹ although his soldiers committed terrible atrocities on the Sikhs. The undaunted Khalsa sang the following couplet: "Mir Mannu is our sickle and we are his grass blades the more he cuts us, the more do we grow in every house and hamlet"¹⁰²

Unable to crush the Sikhs, Mir Mannu died unexpectedly on 4 November 1753, when out on a hunting campaign against the Sikhs.¹⁰³ Emperor Shah of Delhi appointed his own three-year-old son Prince Mahmud Khan as viceroy of Lahore and Multan: the deputy governorship

⁹⁶ Gian Singh. *Panth Prakash*. 628.

⁹⁷ Sohan Lal. I. 135.

⁹⁸ *Tārīkh-i-Ahmad Shāhi*. 45. Sohan Lal. I. 135. Browne. II. 17.

⁹⁹ J.A.S.B., vol. xi. part I (1871), p. 99.

¹⁰⁰ Ratan Singh 307-10. Gyan Singh 701-5.

¹⁰¹ Miskin. 84.

¹⁰² Ali-ud-din. 111a.

¹⁰³ Miskin. 87-90.

was conferred upon Mir Mannu's two-year old son, Muhammad Amin Khan. The latter died towards the end of May 1754, and power was seized by his mother, Murad Begum, popularly called Mughlani Begum. Ahmad Shah, the Delhi emperor, being deposed early in June, was succeeded by Alamgir II, who appointed Momin Khan as governor of Lahore. His authority was flouted by the Begum who, relying on her eunuchs, spent her time in flirting with her paramours. Her profligacies were resented by the better-minded nobles, who decided to put an end to this state of affairs. Their revolt was led by Bhikari Khan, who was seized by the Begum, confined in the palace, and then beaten to death, Khwajah Mirza Jan of Eminabad was more successful. He occupied Lahore, and threw her into prison. She appealed for succour to Ahmad Shah Durrani who sent a force from Kabul to Lahore under the command of Khwajah Ubaidullah Khan. This general restored her to power in April 1755. In July, however, he interned her in her mother's house and took the reins of government in his own hands. He proved a tyrant and plundered his own subjects, particularly the citizens of Lahore, under many pretences. His rule lasted only for a few months, he was replaced, first by Momin Khan, and then by Adina Beg, as nominees of the imperial wazir Imad-ul-mulk in the months of March-May 1756. Adina Beg in his turn left Jamil-ud-din in charge of Lahore as his deputy, and himself returned to his own headquarters. Mughlani Begum, who was in the custody of the wazir, sent woeful letters to the Durrani and Sardar Jahan Khan, appealing for help. Again a force was sent from Afghanistan. Lahore was occupied on 25 November 1756 without firing a shot. Jamil-ud-din had already fled away, and his place was taken by Ubaidullah Khan.¹⁰⁴

These quick political changes broke up the whole fabric of administration in the Punjab. Multan and the four assigned districts (*Chahar Mahal*) were being ruled directly by the agents of Kabul. Adina Beg was playing for his own hand in the government of Lahore. Taking advantage of the confused state of affairs the local zamindars were taking power into their own hands. The Afghans of Alawalpur and the Rajputs of Talwan, Phagwara and Kapurthala were gathering strength in the Jullundur Doab. The Randhwas of Batala and the Afghans of Kasur were acquiring prominence in the Bari Doab. The Bajwas in the Richna and the Warrachis in the Chai were seizing villages and raising forts, while the Tiwanis and the Gakkhars were collecting armies and carving out principalities for themselves.

¹⁰⁴ *Tārikh-i-Ahmad Shahi* 86-108; *Ishmā'īl Mā'mūd*, 21-35; *Rawzat-nāma-i-'Amīrā*, 99; *Tārikh-i-'Alamgīr* 80-81.

in the land between the Jhelum and the Indus. The Lahore government was virtually left in control of the capital and a few surrounding districts. It could not pay even the salaries of its troops, which had to be disbursed out of the money received from the *faujdari* of Adina Beg.¹⁰⁵

FOURTH INVASION OF ABDALI

To complete the disintegration of the Mughal empire Ahmad Shah Durrani came down for the fourth time in the autumn of 1756. In addition to the appeals of Mughlani Begum, already mentioned, he had received an invitation from the Ruhela chief Najib Khan, and even from the emperor Alamgir II himself.¹⁰⁶ Receiving no check during his progress, he entered Lahore, which was already held by his own men. Proceeding towards Delhi, he occupied the imperial city without meeting any opposition. The Mughal court, led by Imad-ul-mulk, the *wazir*, abjectly surrendered to the Afghan invader who entered the imperial fort on 28 January 1757. After the plunder of Delhi the Afghans sacked Mathura. Then an epidemic of cholera compelled the Durrani to break up his camp and hurry back to his country. He appointed Imad-ul-mulk as the *wazir* and Najib-ud-daulah as his own agent in Delhi. The provinces of Lahore, Sialkot, Kashmir, Thatta and Multan were placed in charge of his son Taimur as viceroy with the title of *Shah*, and Jahan Khan was associated with him as his deputy. An immense booty, loaded on 25,000 elephants, camels, mules, bullocks and carts, was carried away.¹⁰⁷

The Sikhs took full advantage of the confusion caused by the weakness of the Lahore government and the invasion of Ahmad Shah Durrani. They organized a protective system of influence, called *Rakhi*, under which they offered full protection to Hindu and Muslim zamindars against all attacks and disturbances in return for a levy of one-fifth of the annual rent. This afforded a considerable measure of peace and safety to the person and property of the inhabitants. A few Mughals and Muslim Rajputs, who did not avail themselves of this offer on account of religious fanaticism or created trouble otherwise, were squeezed out and had to find homes elsewhere.¹⁰⁸ The system was, however, found acceptable to most of the people in the distracted areas, which passed under the control of Sikh sardars. These leaders set up forts in their respective territories, and began to

¹⁰⁵ Ahmad Shah Batalia, *Tārikh-i-Hind*, 870-71. Khushwaqt Rai, 57.

¹⁰⁶ Al-i-nd-din, 248. Nur-ud-din, 14. Franklin, *Shah Alam*, 5.

¹⁰⁷ *Tārikh-i-Alamgir* Sanī, 89-115. Samīn, 14-23. *Khazāna-t-Amira* 53-54 100 Nur-ud-din, 15. SPD. II, 71; XXI, 96, 98, 100.

¹⁰⁸ Bute Shah, I, 871. Browne, viii. Ali-nd-din, 371.

organize some sort of government which became the basis of the administration called the *Misldari* system. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia had already carved out a principality for himself in the Jullundur Doab under the very nose of Adina Beg Khan. Jai Singh Kanhaiya and Jassa Singh Ramgarhia brought the neighbourhood of Batala (called Riarki) under their influence. The Bhangis, led by Hari Singh, Jhanda Singh, Lehna Singh and Gujjar Singh, spread themselves over parts of the Bari and Rechna Doabs. The strip of land between the Ravi and the Ghara called Nakka was under the Nakai sardars. Charat Singh, leader of the Sukarchakias, occupied the land round Gujranwala, and occasionally carried his arms even beyond the Jhelum.¹⁰⁹

At the end of March 1757 the Sikhs collected at Sihind under the leadership of Ala Singh and others and fell upon the van of Timur Shah and Jahan Khan, who were on the way to their new seat of government at Lahore. They carried away from them much of the treasure they were bringing from the Mughal capital. Another attack was made on them and the Afghans army was harassed and plundered. Such was the terror created by this attack that even Timur Shah was rumoured to have been captured and killed.¹¹⁰

To wreak their vengeance upon the Sikhs, the Afghans destroyed the town of Kartarpur, sacred to the memory of Guru Arjan whose Holy Granth in original manuscript was enshrined in the temple there. The precincts of the temple were desecrated with the blood of slaughtered cows, the unsuspecting residents were put to the sword, and the whole town was ruthlessly sacked.¹¹¹

Ahmad Shah on his return from Delhi stayed at Lahore for some time, and sent out a detachment to chastise the Sikhs at Amritsar. The city was plundered and the sacred buildings and the tank were demolished.¹¹² The Durrani formally installed his son as the viceroy of all his Indian possessions, and to secure a friendly ally on the north he bestowed upon Ranjit Dev of Jammu the *parganahs* of Zafarwal, Sankhatra and Aurangabad.¹¹³ Having made these arrangements he left for Peshawar on his way to Qandahar. During this journey he was much harassed by the intrepid Sukarchakia sardar, Charat Singh, who gave him no opportunity to fight a pitched battle but kept on vexing him by pouncing upon the Afghans while engaged in pitching

¹⁰⁹ Sohan Lal, II, 5. Also see scattered references in Bute Shah, Ali-ud-din, Ahmad Shah Batalia, Ratan Singh and Gian Singh.

¹¹⁰ SPD, XXI, 116; XXVII, 148.

¹¹¹ Bute Shah, 477. Ratan Singh, 323. Shamshir Khan, 121.

¹¹² Husain Shahi, 32. Ratan Singh, 323. Budh Singh, 37.

¹¹³ Sialkot District Gazetteer, 6.

their tents in the evening or packing up and loading their baggage in the morning. This continued until the Durrani got off to the other side of the Indus.

TIMUR SHAH AND SIKHS

The main task before Timur Shah was to cudgel down the Sikhs who would not let him rule peacefully. Hearing that they were going to muster in their thousands at Amritsar to celebrate their annual fair, Jahan Khan ordered Haji Atai Khan, who was moving about with a large force, to subjugate the countryside, to march upon the town and to punish the recalcitrant sect. A *jihad* was proclaimed with the beat of drum, calling upon all and sundry to be ready for a holy war against the Sikhs. The Sikhs too felt the urge to defend their holy place, and gathered from all quarters under the leadership of Baba Dip Singh¹¹⁴ to meet the attack. Atai Khan took some time in coming, but Jahan Khan was able to collect a force of about 2000 horsemen who came to grips with the Sikhs near Goharwal, in the neighbourhood of Amritsar, but being unable to cope with the situation fled in all directions. Soon afterwards they were reinforced by Atai Khan's fresh men and artillery, which turned the table on the Sikhs. The victorious Afghans pursued the Sikhs to the town and entered the precincts of the temple. After a few days Jahan Khan returned to Lahore,¹¹⁵ thinking that he had finished with the Sikh troubles.

But the trouble was not over. It was further aggravated by another incident. The cruel persecution of the popular Sikh *chaudhuri* of Kot, in whose jurisdiction two Afghan troopers were killed by chance, was resented by the Sikhs as an insult to their community. They found in Adina Beg a willing ally. He had fled away to the Siwalik hills during the invasion of Ahmad Shah, and was biding his time to come down to the plains and to resume his power. Timur wanted to have him on his side, or failing that, to crush him and to appropriate all the wealth that he was reported to have amassed. He was appointed governor of Jullundui for an annual tribute of 36 lakhs of rupees. He accepted the post on the understanding that he would be exempted from personal attendance at the court. This condition, however, was not adhered to and Adina's presence at Lahore was insisted on. He refused, and hostilities followed.¹¹⁶ Adina Beg sought the help of

¹¹⁴ He was in charge of the *Gurdwara* of Talwandhi Sabo (Damdama Sahib). He had helped Guru Gobind Singh, along with Bhai Mani Singh, in preparing the final recension of the *Adi Granth*.

¹¹⁵ *Tahmasnāma*, 76-77 Browne, ii, 19. Malcolm, 94.

¹¹⁶ *Tahmasnāma*, 77-78 Ali-ud-din, 253-54.

the Sikhs and readily got it. A pact was concluded by which the Sikhs agreed to help him against the Afghans on the condition that he would provide them with money and other accessories of war.¹¹⁷

The combined armies, about 25,000 strong, issued forth from the hills to meet the Afghans who, under Murad Khan, the governor of Multan, as the supreme commander, with Sarfaraz Khan, the *faujdar*-designate of Jullundur, and Buland Khan as his deputies, were advancing against Adina Beg. A sanguinary battle was fought in December 1757 near Mahilpur in the district of Hoshiarpur. The Afghans were equipped with light pieces of artillery in addition to other weapons, but they could not stand the furious attacks of the Sikhs who, though armed only with matchlocks, bows and swords, were reinforced with the spirit of revenge. Buland Khan was killed. Murad Khan fled in panic to Lahore, leaving all his equipage to fall into the hands of the Sikhs. The victors then rushed upon the city of Jullundur and wreaked terrible vengeance for the atrocities of the Afghans at Kartarpur.¹¹⁸

To reward the Sikhs for their help Adina Beg paid them a lakh and a quarter of rupees as *Rakhi* or protection money for the Jullundur Doab. To ingratiate himself further with them, he acknowledged himself to be a sort of round-head Sikh.

Flushed with victory, the Sikhs grew bold and ransacked the whole country up to the neighbourhood of Lahore. An attempt was made to check the tide of their advance. According to a Maratha despatch, dated 6 January 1758, Khwajah Ubaidullah was sent by Timur Shah with an army of 20,000 horse and foot, but he was defeated in a battle, many of his captains were killed, and his camp and baggage were looted. All the artillery left behind by Ahmad Shah Durrani was seized.¹¹⁹ Other forces sent against the Sikhs fared no better. Even the environs of Lahore were not safe. Thousands of Sikhs raided the city every night and plundered its outskirts, but no one dared to come out to face them. The gates were closed soon after nightfall. The situation becoming worse day by day, the whole machinery of government went out of gear.¹²⁰

MARATHAS IN THE PUNJAB

Adina Beg, after weakening the Afghan power, determined to take a bolder step and to drive out the aliens from the Punjab. He knew

¹¹⁷ *Shāh 'Alam Nāma*, 55-58. Ratan Singh, 323-326. *Panth Prakāsh*, 647-48.

¹¹⁸ *Khażānā-i-Āmīrā*, 100. *Tahmānāmā*, 78. *Siyar*, 908-9. *Tārikh-i-Muzaffari*, 548.

⁴⁷ Ratan Singh, 327. •

¹¹⁹ *SPD*, II, 83.

¹²⁰ *Tahmānāmā*, 78. Ahmad Shah Batalia, 326.

that hearing of the affront offered to his son, Ahmad Shah Abdali would certainly come down to retaliate. Against that danger he could not depend upon his Sikh allies who were themselves out for political power. Realising that he must look for help elsewhere he opened negotiations with the Maratha chief, Raghunath Rao, who along with Malhar Rao Holkar and other leaders was stationed in the neighbourhood of Delhi with a large army. He invited Raghunath Rao to the Punjab, promising to pay one lakh rupees for a day of march and 50,000 for a day of halt. The Maratha chief readily accepted the offer and moved towards the north. On 9 March 1758 he reached Sirhind, where he was joined by Adina Beg and his Sikh allies. Abdus Samad Khan, the Abdali's governor of Sirhind, had fortified his capital, but could not withstand the attack and was forced to fly. The Sikhs were the first to enter. They subjected the hated city to wholesale plunder pulling down houses and digging up floors in search of hidden hoards.¹²¹

The Marathas were furious with the Sikhs for having anticipated them in the matter of loot, but the Sikhs claimed priority on account of their old grudge against the city and also because they had made it a condition with Adina Beg. The dispute was settled by an agreement that the Sikhs should vacate the city and when on march should always keep two stages ahead of the Marathas.

The combined forces crossed the Sutlej without opposition. Jahan Khan had come out half-heartedly to meet them in the Doab, but after wasting a few days in manoeuvring near the Beas he sought safety in retiring to Lahore. Even there he was not sure of getting sufficient provisions or munitions to stand a siege. He moved out with Timur to Shahdara on 18 April, and next day left for the frontier.

On 19 April 1758 the Sikhs and the Marathas entered Lahore. They killed or captured all the Uzbek, Qizilbash and Afghan soldiers left by Timur. The captives were taken to Amritsar, where they were forced to clean the sacred tank, desecrated and filled by Ahmad Shah and Jahan Khan.¹²² The leading Sikhs, who took part in this campaign with 10 to 15 thousand horse, were Charat Singh Sukarchakia, Tara Singh Ghaiha, both Jassa Singhs Hari Singh, Lehna Singh, Gujjar Singh and Jhanda Singh Bhangis.¹²³

The Sikhs had conquered the country in the company of the Marathas, and Adina Beg, but they were soon to become the real

121 *Tahmasbnama*, 78-79. *Khazāñd-i-Amīrī*, 100. *Siyar*, 909. *Tālib-i-Ālamgīr Sāni*, 164-65. Cf. Bhakht Mal, 40.

122 Ratan Singh, 34-31. *Tahmasbnama*, 81-83. *Husain Shahi*, 35. *Haqiqat*, 57. Budh Singh, 37. *SPD*, XXVII, 218.

123 *Haqiqat*, 36-37. Budh Singh, 38-37.

masters. For some time, however, the Marathas gave an impression that they were going to swamp all power in the land. Adina Beg tried to make much of their presence. A few detachments of the Marathas pressed on to the north-west beyond the Indus,¹²⁴ and to the south-west as far as Multan. But they soon had to abandon the Punjab. Their leader, Raghunath Rao, after a stay at Lahore for less than a month, realized that it would be impossible for the Marathas to hold the country on the strength of a few garrisons in the face of the rising power of the Sikhs, who were then issuing forth from their hill recesses and spreading over the land in all directions. The financial position of the Maratha central government at Poona was not strong enough to maintain their garrisons and their communications in such a distant country as the Punjab. They, therefore, decided to leave the government in the hands of Adina Beg in return for an annual tribute of 75 lakhs. On 10 May 1758 the army under Raghunath Rao moved out of Lahore. Only a few detachments were left at Multan and Attock, but these too were driven out in the following year by the Abdali.¹²⁵

ADINA BEG'S HOSTILITIES

Adina Beg lived to enjoy the governorship of Lahore only for four months. During this short period he made desperate efforts to strengthen his hold on the country, which he could do only by extirpating his erstwhile allies, the Sikhs, who were daily growing strong at his expense.

Adina Beg shifted his headquarters from Lahore to Adinanagar, a town founded by himself in the healthy region of Batala. There he gathered a large army, which was reinforced by 10,000 feudal troops contributed by different hill chiefs.¹²⁶ He ordered all the zamindars of the Punjab to take measures to destroy the Sikhs wherever found. The Randhawa zamindars showed the greatest zeal in hunting down the Sikhs. Mirza Aziz Bakhshi, a trusted noble, was placed at the head of an expeditionary force, with a contingent of a thousand car-

124 Some writers have denied the fact that the Marathas ever advanced beyond the Chenab. *Khazāna-i-Amīrā* (101), followed by *Jam-i-Jahān-nāma* (120), mentions the pursuit of the Afghans by the Marathas as far as the Jhelum. The advance of the Marathas up to the Indus is recorded in the *Husain Shāhi* (35), *Tārikh-i-Sultāni* (134), *Ibratnāma* (255), *Ahwāl-i-Ādīna Beg* (12), *Khakānāma* (41), *Imād-us-Sā'ādat* (74), *Khushwaqt Rai* (58), etc. That some of the Marathas penetrated even into the Peshawar territory, under Tukojī Holkar, Narsoji Pandit and Sabaji Patil, is evident from correspondence published in *B.I.S. Mandal Quarterly*, Poona, XXIV-1 (93), July, 1943, p. 6.

125 *Khazāna-i-'Amīrā*, 101 *Tārikh-i-Muzaffari*, 547. *Delhi Chronicle*.

126 *Ahwāl-i-Ādīna Beg* 13.

pelters to cut down the forest trees which gave shelter to the rebels. A siege was laid to the mud fort of Ram Rauni, where the Sikhs had taken shelter. Their leaders displayed great bravery and were able to slip out, leaving a few dead or captured.¹²⁷ Another expedition sent against the Sikhs suffered a heavy defeat near Qadian, leaving much bag and baggage in the hands of the victors.¹²⁸

The repression of the Sikhs was cut short by the death of Adina Beg on 15 September 1758. This old fox had been secretly befriending the Sikhs to further his own schemes of ambition against his co-religionists. In this process he had unconsciously been contributing to the fulfilment of Sikh aspirations. Towards the end of his life, when he thought he had removed all the obstacles in his way—the Afghans as also the Marathas—he began to pull down the very scaffolding with which he had raised himself, we mean the Sikhs. But it was too late. The Sikhs were no longer mere refugees hunted from place to place at the whim of the rulers. They had become a real power in the land, without whose co-operation nobody could establish his rule in the Punjab.

Khwajah Mirza Jan, whom Adina Beg had left in charge of Lahore, sought the help of the Sikhs (in September-October 1758) against the Afghans and the Gakkhars, under the Abdali's general, Nur-ud-din Bamezei, and drove them away from the *paraganah* of Gujarat.¹²⁹ Then came the Marathas under Jankoji Sindhia to take charge of Lahore and maintain peace and order. In March 1759 Jankoji sent Sabaji Patil in advance to Lahore, keeping himself in reserve at Machhiwara, where he received the homage of the members of Adina Beg's family. The real cause of his hesitation to advance on the capital of the Punjab, as given by *Tārikh-i-'Alamgir Sāni*, was that the Sikhs had established themselves in a commanding position in Lahore and its neighbourhood. Jankoji returned to Delhi, but Sabaji reached Lahore and made some administrative arrangements, such as the dismissal of Mirza Jan and his replacement by Mirza Ahmad Khan, one of the Afghan captives. But he too could not do without the Sikhs' aid. When a force belonging to Jahan Khan's army crossed the Indus, they were defeated and pushed back by Sabaji with the help of the Sikhs. The real effectiveness of the Sikhs' strength, however, was to be demonstrated in the coming event.¹³⁰

127 Ahmad Shah Batalia, 416.

128 Ali-ud-din, 257.

129 *Tārikh-i-'Alamgir Sāni*, 191.

130 Ibid., 192, 205, Rajwade, VI, 378.

FIFTH INVASION OF ABDALI: PANIPAT

Ahmad Shah entered India for the fifth time in 1759 in order to recover his lost hold on the Punjab. His chief object was to punish the Marathas who had expelled his son from Lahore, and against whom he had been receiving complaints, especially from Najib-ud-daulah, his representative in India, who had been turned out of Delhi by the Marathas and was then being besieged by them at Shukartal, 70 miles east of Panipat. He also received invitations from certain Rajput rulers, like Madho Singh of Jaipur and Bijay Singh of Marwar, who felt aggrieved at the Maratha inroads into their territories. Even Alamgir II had been secretly urging him to come and rescue him from the galling yoke of his *wazir*, Imad-ul-mulk.¹³¹

The Shah, with an army of about 60,000 men, crossed the Indus on 25 October 1759. The Maratha garrisons fell like nine pins before the advancing army of the invader under Jahan Khan. Sabaji without striking a blow fell back from Lahore and fled towards Shukartal. The ownerless capital was occupied, and Surat Singh Khatri was directed to have the *Khutbah* read and coins struck in the name of Timur Shah. Sabaji's detachments could not be withdrawn in time. One general and some soldiers, found lingering near Lahore, were cut to pieces by the Afghan vanguard. Another force of the Marathas while crossing the Sutlej, was set upon by the villagers of the Doab and deprived of 4000 camels, most of their horses, treasure and other property.¹³²

Though the Marathas had struck no blow, the Sikhs did not fail in their duty. They resisted the advance of the invaders, and fought a severe battle in which 2000 Afghans were killed and their general Jahan Khan was wounded.¹³³ The Shah, however, continued his march and passing through Sirhind, Ambala and Taraori, where he defeated Dattaji Sindhi, he came to Saharanpur, where he was joined by Najib-ud-daulah. On 9 January 1760 a battle was fought at Barari-*ghat* where the Marathas suffered another defeat and Dattaji was killed. The Shah spent a year in the neighbourhood of Delhi, waiting for the final struggle with the Marathas.

The historic battle of Panipat was fought on 14 January 1761. It was a trial of strength between the Muslim powers and the greatest Hindu power of the day. All the north Indian Muslim states had allied

¹³¹ *Ahwāl-i-Najīb-ud-daulah*, 19. *Khazāna-i-Āmīrā*, 101. *Husain Shāh*, 38. *Tarīkh-i-Muzaffari*, 589. *SPID*, II, 84, 106; XI, 176. *Rajwade*, I, 138.

¹³² *Tarīkh-i-Ālamgīr Sāmī*, 241. *Ali-ud-din*, 259. *Rajwade*, I, 139, 141-43, 146. *Sohān Lal*, I, 147. *Shamsīr Khalwa*, 180.

¹³³ *Rajwade*, I, 148.

themselves with the Afghan invader, while the Marathas had to depend solely on their own resources. The Rajputs and the Jats stood aloof; the Sikhs were not invited. The only concern of the Sikhs with this battle was that during the close blockade of the Marathas at Panipat, in November 1760, Ala Singh of Patiala helped them by supplying provisions to them from the rear.¹³⁴

After the Abdali's great victory it was feared that he might take some strong action against Patiala. Barnala was actually looted by the Pathans. Ala Singh foreseeing the coming storm retired for some time to Munak, away from the main road; but the situation was saved by his sagacious wife, Mai Fatto, whose agent Birum Dhillon was able to purchase the good-will of Ahmad Shah by paying 4 lakhs of rupees. By a rescript issued in March 1761 Ala Singh was confirmed in his possessions, as a ruler independent of Sirhind, in return for a tribute of 5 lakhs. Mirza Muhammad Taqi was left at Patiala for the purpose of collecting the dues. For this act of submission to the foreign invader Ala Singh was condemned and fined by the *Dal Khalsa*.¹³⁵

SIKH BID FOR SOVEREIGNTY

The Khalsa wanted nothing less than sovereignty. They availed themselves of the opportunity offered by the unsettled state of affairs caused by the Afghan invasion. Ahmad Shah on his way to Delhi had left Karim Dad Khan as governor of Lahore. He was soon recalled, and Sarbuland Khan was sent to replace him. This man, out of fear of the Sikhs, kept away from Lahore and made Jullundur his capital, nominating Saadat Yar Khan as his deputy to stay at Lahore. Two other governors followed in rapid succession; one was *Diwan* Surat Singh, an old servant of the state, and the other was Mir Muhammad Khan, son of Mir Momin Khan of Kasur. None of them could check the increasing power of the Sikhs. The zamindars from all over the central Punjab had begun to withdraw their allegiance from the foreigner and were gathering round the more popular and vigorous leaders of the land.

On the occasion of *Diwali* in 1760, which fell on 7 November, the *Sarbat Khalsa* gathered at Amritsar and resolved by a *gurmatta* to take possession of Lahore. About 10,000 horsemen, under the leadership of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, Charat Singh Sukarchakia, Jai Singh Kanhaiya, Hari Singh Bhangi, Gujjar Singh, Lehna Singh, and others, moved out to attack the capital. After cutting off all communications

¹³⁴ *Khazānā-t-Amīra*, 107. *Tarikh-i-Muzaffrī*, 598. *Shyār*, 913.

¹³⁵ Karam Singh, *Ālā Singh*, 207-13.

they ransacked the suburbs, and were on the point of breaking into the city, when prominent citizens prevailed on the governor, Muhammad Khan, to ward off the calamity by making a present of 30,000 rupees to the Sikhs. The Sikhs accepted the amount, and retired.¹³⁶

Having brought the authorities at Lahore to their knees and finding the whole fabric of the government going to pieces, the Sikhs felt emboldened to throw up mud forts everywhere and to occupy the surrounding areas. The local officials found themselves helpless. For instance, the governor of the *Chahar Mahal* and Tahmas Khan, the author of *Tahmasnāma*, who was acting as the ruler of Sialkot, fell into the hands of the Sikhs and had to pay a ransom before they could get their release.¹³⁷

The Sikhs did not spare even the victorious invader. When on his return from Delhi his soldiers were crossing the Sutlej, they were set upon by a troop of the Sikhs and relieved of much of their booty. About 2200 Hindu women, who were being taken away as captives by the Afghans, were also released and restored to their families.¹³⁸ The retreating Afghans were allowed no rest. The Sikhs hovered about the Afghan line of march, cutting off the supplies and doing what damage they could but never making a direct attack.¹³⁹ Every night the Shah had to throw up a slight work round his camp in order to secure it against the Sikhs' attack. In this manner he continued his march to the Indus, the Sikhs following him all the way.¹⁴⁰

On their return from the Indus, in May 1761, the Sikhs spread themselves over most of the Punjab, carrying their arms through the Majha and the Doab, and even beyond up to Nadaun in the Siwalik hills. When passing through the *Chahar Mahal* they were met by its saujdar Khwajah Mirza Jan who, being outnumbered, was defeated and killed.¹⁴¹

Finding his administrative arrangements upset by the Sikhs, Ahmad Shah deputed his general, Nur-ud-din Bamezai, to chastise the refractory people. The officials in the Punjab were instructed to co-operate with him. On crossing the Chenab he was encountered by Charat Singh, who after defeating him forced him to fly, with 12,000 of his men, for shelter into the fort of Sialkot. From there

¹³⁶ Sohan Lal, 150. Ali-ud-din, 262-63.

¹³⁷ *Tahmasnāma*, 103-6.

¹³⁸ Browne, ii, 22. Kanhiya Lal, *Tārīkh-i-Punjab*, 102-3. *Shamshūr Khalsa*, 145.

¹³⁹ *Rajas of the Punjab*, 230.

¹⁴⁰ Browne, ii, 22. Bhakht Mal, 47. Budh Singh, 47.

¹⁴¹ *Tahmasnāma*, 108.

too he was forced to fly after a close siege, and his garrison after a formal surrender was allowed to depart.¹⁴²

Hearing of the discomfiture of the Durrani general, Khwajah Ubaid Khan (who had replaced Sarbuland Khan in the viceroyalty of Lahore) collected a huge force and, quite against the advice of his courtiers, marched upon Gujranwala, the capital of Charat Singh. The besieged sardar came out now and then and inflicting heavy losses on the enemy went back into his fort. Several sardars, like the inimitable Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, Hari Singh Bhangi, Jai Singh Kanhaiya, Lehna Singh, Sobha Singh and Gujjar Singh, rushed to the aid of their beleaguered comrade and made a night attack on the besiegers. A few Sikhs who had entered the service of Ubaid Khan left him at this stage and went over to their co-religionists. Thus circumstanced, he saw his safety in flight. His leaderless troops were soon routed, and a considerable number of guns, horses, camels and stores of different kinds fell into the hands of the victor. Khwajah Ubaid found his way back to Lahore with some difficulty.¹⁴³

The Sikhs followed up their victory with promptness, and appeared before the walls of Lahore. The leading citizens opened the gates to welcome them. Led by Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, the victors entered the capital and proclaimed him king, with the title of *Sultan-ul-Qaum*. He coined money in the name of the Guru, with the following inscription¹⁴⁴ on it:

*Deg o tegh o fateh o nusrat be-dirang
Yafz az Nanak Guru Gobind Singh.*

Without completely establishing themselves in the city (the fort being still held by Khwajah Ubaid Khan) the Sikhs rushed out into the Jullundur Doab and routed the Afghan *faujdars*, Saadat Khan and Sadiq Khan Afridi. The Hindu chief, raja Chumand Chand Katauch, who had been appointed governor of Jullundur, quietly left for the hills on their approach. Thus the entire Punjab, from the Indus to the Sutlej, passed into their hands, with only a few re-

142 Sohan Lal, ii, 6-7. *Panth Prakash*, 762. *Mukhizan-i-Punjab*, 417.

143 Sohan Lal, i, 154, ii, 7-8. Ali-ud-din, 284-66. *Tahmasnāma*, 108-9. Khushwant Rai, 60. Ahmad Shah Batalia, 340-41. Ratan Singh, 378-88. Bute Shah, ii, 5.

144 Most of the historians have given a different reading, adding the following words of bravado in it: *Sikka zad dar jahan ba-fazl-i-Akal Mulk-i-Ahmad grift Jassa Kalal*. It is very improbable that any Sikh ruler, much less a religious zealot like Jassa Singh, should have issued a coin in his own name, and that too a clipped name, i.e., mere *Jassa* instead of *Jassa Singh*. The fact seems to be, as given by Ganesh Das Vadhera in his *Chahār Gulshan-i-Punjab* (178), that certain Muslim fanatics forged a few coins bearing this provocative inscription and took them to Kabul to arouse the Abdalis' wrath against the Sikhs.

factories still holding out in the Abdali's name. The communications between the frontier and the east were cut off, and the people intending to cross the Punjab had to make a long detour along the base of the northern hills.¹⁴⁵

To celebrate their annual day of *Diwali* the *Sarbat Khalsa* came from all quarters and held a Panthic gathering at Amritsar on 27 October 1761. They passed a *gurmatta* to reduce the strongholds of all the allies and supporters of Ahmad Shah who were proving a hindrance in the liberation of the country. The one nearest at hand was Aqil Das of Jandiala, the Guru of the dissenting sect of the Niranjanis, who had been always aiding the enemies of the Sikhs. He was informed of the decision of the Khalsa by Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, evidently with a view to getting his submission. But instead of making a compromise with the Sikhs he wrote immediately to the Shah and invited his help.¹⁴⁶

SIXTH INVASION OF ABDALI WADDA GHALUGHARA

The Abdali who was already on his way to India met the messengers of Aqil Das at Rohtas. He hurried to Jandiala only to find that the Sikhs had raised the siege and gone away towards Sirhind. The reason given by the author of *Husain Shâhi* for the hasty retreat of the Sikhs is that the followers of Aqil Das had hung out shanks of beef from the walls of the fort. But the real reason for their hurried withdrawal was that they wanted to take away with them their families and place them beyond the reach of the advancing Afghan army. They had also to avenge the death of Dval Singh Barar, who had been recently put to death by Zain Khan, the governor of Sirhind.

Hearing that the Sikhs were gathering in villages close to Malerkotla, Bhikhan Khan, the Afghan chief of the place, called in the assistance of Zain Khan and informed the Shah of the Sikh menace.¹⁴⁷ On receipt of this intelligence the Shah left Lahore on 3 February 1762, reaching the village of Kupp near Malerkotla two days later. There about 30,000 Sikhs were encamped with their families and all their belongings. He had already sent instructions to Zain Khan to march out with all his troops and deliver an attack on the front, while he himself would fall upon the rear.¹⁴⁸

Taken by surprise, the desperate Sikhs decided to die fighting. They

¹⁴⁵ *Tahmasnamâ*, 109. *Panth Prakash*, 725.

¹⁴⁶ *Ah-ud-din*, 267. *Kanhî Lal*, 85. *Gazetteer of Amritsar District*, 165.

¹⁴⁷ *Husain Shâhi*, 61. Budh Singh, 47. Bhakht Mal, 48. *Panth Prakash*, 729 30
Cf. Ratan Singh, 347 48

¹⁴⁸ *Khazana-i-'Amira*, 111. *Tahmasnamâ*, 110. *Husain Shâhi*, 65.

threw a strong cordon round the survivors among their women and children, and moved on fighting and fought on moving, occasionally turning upon their assailants and inflicting losses on them. Sham Singh Karora Singhia, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and Charat Singh Sukarchakia led the main army and directed the movement of the noncombatants under protection. The Shah wanted to have a pitched battle with them, but they would not give him a chance. They pushed along fighting from village to village, receiving hostility rather than shelter from the local people who were afraid of the invader's vengeance. The hunted Sikhs were obliged to trek on. Their aim was to reach Barnala, where they hoped to find some relief from Ala Singh, failing which they could pass on into the waterless desert of Bhatinda.

Before they could reach Barnala, however, their cordon was pierced through by the Afghans and a wholesale massacre ensued. About 10,000 Sikhs at the lowest estimate are said to have met their death. This fearful carnage, which occurred on 5 February 1762, is called *Wadda Ghalughara* (or the Second Great Holocaust) in Sikh history, to distinguish it from the first which took place in 1746.¹⁴⁹ The famous volume of the Holy Granth completed by Guru Gobind Singh at Damdama Sahib, which was carried by the Sikhs before their armies on march, was lost in this battle.¹⁵⁰

The Malwa Sikhs had been comparatively peaceful, and had given no trouble to the invader. Their leader, Ala Singh of Patiala, had been following a neutral policy and had given no help to his co-religionists in trouble. There was no reason why the Abdali should take any action against him. But his neighbouring rivals, the nawabs of Sirhind and Malerkotla, poisoned the mind of Ahmad Shah, telling him that Ala Singh was a secret ally of the Majha Sikhs, and that if he were put under arrest a ransom of 50 lakhs could be easily recovered from him.

When the Shah entered Barnala, which was in the territory of Ala Singh, it was expected that the *sardar*, as a feudatory chief, would present himself before his liege lord and pay homage to him. Ala Singh, however, had slipped away before his arrival to the fort of Bhawanigarh. The Shah in his absence burnt down the town of Barnala and advanced on Bhawanigarh. Seeing no escape from the inevitable, Ala Singh through the mediation of Najib-ud-daulah pacified the Shah by paying him 5 lakhs as tribute and another amount

¹⁴⁹ *Tahmasnāma*, 110-11. *Khazāna-i-ĀMīrā*, 114. *Bhakti Mal*, 48. *Khushwaqt Rai*, 90-81 *Tārīkh-i-Salātīn-i-Afghānīn*, 125. *Ali-ud-din*, 267-68. *Husain Shāhī*, 41-44. *Ratan Singh*, 348-58. *Panth Prakash*, 730-41. *Rajwade*, VI, 465. *Browne*, ii, 23. *Malcolm*, 98.

¹⁵⁰ *Panth Prakash*, 740

of 125,000 rupees for permission to appear before him with his long hair intact.¹⁵¹ He was, however, detained for some time, and then released and confirmed in his dominion on the promise of regular payment of annual tribute.¹⁵² The Shah returned to Lahore on 3 March. To create an impression on the Sikh population he brought with him 50 carts laden with the heads of the Sikhs killed in battle and a large number of captives. "Pyramids were erected and covered with the heads of the slaughtered Sikhs; and it is mentioned that Ahmad Shah caused the walls of those mosques, which the Sikhs had polluted, to be washed with their blood."¹⁵³

To further punish the Sikhs the Abdali attacked them at Amritsar on the eve of the *Baisakhi* festival (10 April 1762) when thousands of them had gathered for a bath in the holy tank. They dispersed at his approach, and he took occasion to blow up their sacred temple with gunpowder. The tank, after being desecrated with the blood of cows, was filled up with refuse and debris. As the buildings were being blown up, a flying brick-bat is said to have struck the Shah on his nose and inflicted a wound from which he never recovered.¹⁵⁴

Ahmad Shah had still much to do. Settling the affairs of the Marathas in a friendly way by recognizing the authority of the peshwa and reconquering Kashmir and replacing Sukhjiwan with Sarbuland Khan as its governor, he turned his attention again to the Sikhs. For some time, however, on account of the oppressive heat of the plains, he could not do anything against them, beyond merely asking the various chiefs and zamindars to lend a hand in oppressing them. He himself retired to Kalanaur, a comparatively cool place in the upper Bari Doab. The chiefs and zamindars had to bear the brunt of the Sikh attack without any aid from him.

The Sikhs now were really furious. The pollution of their most sacred place, coming close on the unprecedented carnage of 5 February, had stung them to the quick. Within four months, while the Shah was still at Lahore, they were once again at the throat of Zain Khan, who looking in vain for help from his Afghan master was obliged to make peace with them on payment of 50,000 rupees as tribute. Hardly had they gone a few miles from Sirhind, before the treacherous nawab fell upon their rear and looted their baggage. They turned

¹⁵¹ *Tārīkh-i-Salātīn-i-Afghānān*, 125.

¹⁵² Ali-ud-din, 268. Cf. Bute Shah, I, 627. *Tārīkh-i-Punjab*, 85.

¹⁵³ Forster, I, 279.

¹⁵⁴ *Tārīkh-i-Sultānī*, 132 Ali-ud-din, 270. Khushwaqt Rai, 61. *Panth Prakāsh*, 742. *Chahār Gulshan*, 171. Malcolm, 98.

back, and fighting a pitched battle at Harnaulgarh defeated Zain Khan and his *diwan* Lachhmi Narain.¹⁵⁵

Emboldened by this success the Sikhs began to spread themselves in different directions. While Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and Tara Singh Ghaiba took the Jullundur Doab, Charat Singh Sukarchakia and the Bhangi sardars carried their arms to the north and north-west of Lahore. For a full month, from 25 August to 24 September 1762, a strong force of theirs lay encamped in the region of Panipat and Karnal—so close to Delhi and such was the dread of their presence that the envoys of the Delhi emperor could not proceed to Lahore and had to turn back from Panipat.¹⁵⁶ The Sikhs used to hover round the Shah's own camp with impunity, and the Shah wondered at their daring and the recouping power which made them unconquerable.

On 17 October 1762 fell the *Diwali* festival, and about 60,000 Sikhs assembled at Amritsar, with the resolve to avenge the insult offered to their temple and to retrieve the loss of national honour suffered in the Great Holocaust. Receiving news of this gathering, the Shah, who had returned from Kalanaur to Lahore and had no sufficient force with him, thought of averting a clash by resorting to diplomacy. He sent an envoy to the Khalsa 'to negotiate a peace with them and to prevent that effusion of blood which their desperate determination threatened to produce...', but on the arrival of this person in the camp of the Sikhs instead of listening to his proposals they plundered him and his followers and drove them away.¹⁵⁷ All efforts at peace being fruitless, the Shah marched from Lahore and reached Amritsar on 16 October, the day before the *Diwali*. Early next morning the Sikhs drew up their armies and made a desperate attack. The Afghans fought with equal energy during the whole day, which was darkened by a total eclipse of the sun, but neither Afghan courage nor darkness could make any impression on the Sikhs. The tact and skill of the greatest military genius of the time in Asia gave way before the zeal and determination born of religious fervour and sacrifice. The Shah was compelled to withdraw his forces and escape to Lahore under cover of darkness.¹⁵⁸

The Sikhs had given a signal defeat to the Abdali, but they did not expect him to take it lying down. He was sure to return with a larger army. As a protective measure they escaped to their famous

¹⁵⁵ Rajwade, VI, 384.

¹⁵⁶ *Delhi Chronicle*, 192-93.

¹⁵⁷ Browne, ii. 25.

¹⁵⁸ Browne, ii, 25-26. Forster, 100-1.

haunt, the Lakhi Jungle, not, however, without a minor skirmish which is described in detail by Ahmad Yadgar.¹⁵⁹

The Shah had had enough of the Sikhs for the present, and hearing of some disturbances in Afghanistan he resolved to go home. Before his departure he gave the command of the whole province to Raja Kabuli Mal, Sirhind to Zain Khan, Jullundur to Shaadat Yar Khan, the hill territory between the Sutlej and the Beas to Raja Ghumand Chand Katauch of Kangra, Kalanaur to Ubaid Khan, the Bari Doab to Murad Khan, the Rachna and Sind Sagar Doabs to Jahan Khan (in addition to the province of Peshawar), and Kashmir to Nur-ud-din Bamezai. On 12 December 1762 he left Lahore for Afghanistan.

SIKH CONQUESTS

No sooner had Ahmad Shah left the Punjab than the Sikhs came out of the Lakhi Jungle and other places and began to overthrow his officers. The *Budha Dal* led by Jassa Singh Ahluwalia went about the country establishing *thanas* and punishing the enemies, while the *Tarunā Dal* led by the younger leaders like Charat Singh Sukarchakia established itself at Amritsar and undertook to cleanse the holy tank and restore the ruined temple.¹⁶⁰ When occasion arose they also issued forth to make conquests. While the *Sarbat Khalsa* were gathered at the Akal Takht, Amritsar, on the occasion of Baisakhi on 10 April 1763, some Brahmins of Kasur came and complained against the Afghan inhabitants of their city, especially against Usman Khan who had forcibly carried away the wife of one of them and converted her to Islam. Hari Singh Bhangi of the *Tarunā Dal* volunteered to help the aggrieved Brahmins, and being supported by Charat Singh led an expedition against Kasur. Usman Khan, with some 500 of his men, was killed, and the Brahmin lady was restored to her husband.¹⁶¹

Being apprised of these activities of the Sikhs, Ahmad Shah deputed Jahan Khan to march against them. They heard of his coming on 4 November 1763, when they were assembled at Amritsar to celebrate *Diwali*. They postponed the reconstruction of the temple and came out to meet Jahan Khan who was proceeding to Sialkot. Led by Charat Singh, who was aided by the Bhangi sardars Jhanda Singh

¹⁵⁹ *Tārikh-i-Salāfir-i-Afghānān*, 172-73.

¹⁶⁰ *Tahmasnāma*, 113. Sohan Lal, 1, 160.

¹⁶¹ Bute Shah, 594-35. Ahmad Shah Batalia, 491-98. Ratan Singh, 371-77.

and Gujar Singh, they inflicted a crushing defeat on the Durrani general at Sialkot and forced him to hasten back to Peshawar.¹⁶²

The Sikhs, under Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, next turned to Malerkotla to settle their account with Bhikhan Khan for the part played by him in the *Ghalughara*. The Khan came out to meet them, but was over-powered by the Sikhs and killed in action. In this battle Ala Singh had also sent his Patiala contingent to help the *Budha Dal*.¹⁶³

The *Dal* then moved on in the north-easterly direction, and entering the territory of Sirhind fell upon Morinda. Two inhabitants of this place, Jani Khan and Mani Khan, had arrested and handed over the sons of Guru Gobind Singh to the nawab of Sirhind in 1704. The sons and grandsons of these two men, along with other Ranghars, were caught hold of and hammered to death.¹⁶⁴

The turn of Sirhind came next. Zain Khan, its faujdar, had become very unpopular on account of his high-handed rule. Tahmas Khan says about him: "He would not pay the salaries of his troops and officials, and indiscriminately plundered the people of his province. The looted grain was given to his soldiers in lieu of pay and that too only one-fourth of what was actually due to them. He allied himself with the hill chiefs for the purpose of making money."¹⁶⁵ In addition to the disaffection caused by his maladministration, there were other factors which contributed to his weakness. His master, Ahmad Shah, was away in Afghanistan and could not come soon. Saadat Khan of Jullundur was terror-stricken. Kabuli Mal of Lahore had no strong army. His friend and ally, Bhikhan Khan of Malerkotla, was dead. His own officers, like Murtaza Khan and Qasim Khan, had left him in disgust. He had to meet the Sikhs with his own resources which were very poor.

The Sikhs, on the other hand, were at the fullest of their strength; all the forces of the two *Dals* had come together, besides Ala Singh's Patiala contingent under the command of Himmat Singh and Chain Singh. The total strength of the Khalsa present at the siege, as given by Gyan Singh, was about 50,000.

The Sikhs, united under the flag of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, made a determined attack on Sirhind on 14 January 1764. Zain Khan, in an attempt to escape, was shot dead, and his Afghan troops in panic ran away in all directions. They were pursued and cut to pieces. The

¹⁶² *Delhi Chronicle*, 11 December 1783. Sohan Lal, ii, 11. Ahmad Shah Batalia, 984-85. Ali-ud-din, 274-75, 358.

¹⁶³ Sohan Lal, i, 180. Browne, ii, 24. *Tārīkh-i-Khāndān-i-Phulkian*, 16.

¹⁶⁴ Ratan Singh, 369-70.

¹⁶⁵ *Tahmasnāma*, 113-14.

city was subjected to indiscriminate plunder and its buildings were razed to the ground. Afterwards, in fulfilment of a popular prophecy, the place was ploughed over with donkeys. The spot where the infant sons of Guru Gobind Singh had been done to death was sought out and a *Gurdwara*, called *Fatehgarh* (or fort of victory), was built on it. With this victory the entire province of Sirhind, about 220 miles in length and 160 miles in width, extending from the Sutlej in the north to the districts of Karnal and Rohtak in the south, and from the boundary of the Bahawalpur state on the west to the Jamuna on the east, worth about 60 lakhs of rupees annually, came into the possession of the Sikhs.¹⁶⁶

The manner of parcelling out the territory among different leaders was peculiar. "Tradition still describes", says Cunningham, "how the Sikhs dispersed as soon as the battle was over, and how riding by day and night, each horseman would throw his belt and scabbard, his articles of dress and accoutrement, until he was almost naked, into successive villages, to mark them as his." But no one would accept the city of Sirhind of accursed memory. The leading residents of the city were then invited to choose their own master. They declared themselves in favour of one Bhai Buddha Singh, from whom Ala Singh purchased it later for the sum of 25,000 rupees.¹⁶⁷

While the *Budha Dal*, swept on by the impulse of victory, crossed the Jamuna at Buriya and made a few conquests in the Gangetic Doab,¹⁶⁸ the *Tarunā Dal* poured into the Jullundur Doab, and driving out Saadat Khan partitioned it among themselves.

They pushed on to Lahore, and seizing the neighbouring country, in February 1764, came to threaten the city itself. When they broke through the Delhi Gate the Hindu governor, Kabuli Mal, yielded. He paid a large sum to the Sikhs. He also agreed to keep with him an agent of Hari Singh Bhangi, one Tek Chand by name, who was to advise him in the conduct of affairs.¹⁶⁹

The *Tarunā Dal* was now divided into two sections : one under Hari Singh Bhangi marched to the south-west, and the other under Charat Singh Sukarchakia took to the north-west. Hari Singh, accompanied by his sons Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh and the Nakai leader Hira Singh, ran through the whole region called Lamma and Nakka, which fell into the hands of the Nakai sardars, until they came to Multan, which was captured and acquired by the Bhangis. They then

¹⁶⁶ *Tahmasnāmā*, 119. *Ali-ud-din*, 271. *Sohan Lal*, ii, 11. *Bute Shah*, 522. *Browne*, ii, 24.

¹⁶⁷ *Muqaddama-i-Chahārīmān*, 4-8, 16, 20.

¹⁶⁸ *Browne*, ii, 24. *SPD*, XIX, 55. *Calcutta Review*, vol. 50 (1875), p. 26.

¹⁶⁹ *Ali-ud-din*, 273-74. *Kanhiya Lal*, 87.

crossed the Indus and overran the territory of the Derajat, Jhang, Khushab and Chiniot were appropriated by Jhanda Singh, the redoubtable son of Hari Singh.¹⁷⁰

The other division under Charat Singh, early in summer, marched across the Rachna and the Chaj Doabs, brushing aside the Afghan resistance, and came to the famous fort of Rohtas beyond the Jhelum. It was held by Sarbuland Khan, who stoutly stood the siege for four months and would not yield. Charat Singh resorted to a feint which succeeded admirably. He pretended to raise the siege and move away. Sarbuland Khan rushed out to pursue the Sikhs, who suddenly turned back and converging upon the fort took it unawares. Sarbuland Khan was captured and held to ransom. He was so pleased with the kind behaviour of Charat Singh that he offered to serve under him as a governor if the Sikh sardar would declare himself king. "The kingship is already bestowed upon us Sikhs by the Guru", said Charat Singh.¹⁷¹

The regions of Dhani, Pothohar, Chakwal and Pind Dadan Khan were subdued next. Charat Singh built forts and garrisoned them with his own troops.

SEVENTH INVASION OF ABDALI

Hearing of the Sikh eruptions in the Punjab and of the failure of Jahan Khan and Sarbuland Khan to resist them, the intrepid Abdali made up his mind to descend once more upon India. He called upon his Baluch ally, Mir Nasir Khan of Kalat, to join him in the crusade against the Sikhs. Nasir Khan, who had already heard of the Sikh inroad into Multan and the Deras, consulted Muslim divines and secured a *fatwa* from them for a *jehad* against the Sikhs.

In October 1764 the Shah crossed the Indus at the head of 18,000 Afghans, and was joined at Yminabad by Nasir Khan with 12,000 Baluchis. At Lahore Kabuli Mal joined his camp and remained with him throughout the campaign.¹⁷²

The Sikhs in the meantime had left their places on the Grand Trunk Road and had vanished out of sight. It was reported that their main body had taken themselves to the Lakh Jungle, about 150 miles from Lahore. In fact a large number of them, about 15,000, had gone

¹⁷⁰ Nur Muhammad. *Jangnāma*, 38, 40-41; *Imperial Gazetteer of India, Punjab*, ii, 208, 217.

¹⁷¹ Sohan Lal, ii, 11-12. *Chahār Gulshan-i-Panjab*, 178-79.

¹⁷² Most of the details of this invasion are taken from Qazi Nur Muhammad's *Jangnāma*.

to assist Jawahir Singh of Bharatpur against the Ruhela chief, Najib-ud-daulah,¹⁷³ and the rest were hanging about in villages and biding their time.

They were, however, not wholly absent from the central districts when it was reported that 'an innumerable *lashkar* of the Sikhs' had fallen upon an Afghan scouting party. Nasir Khan moved forward at the head of the whole army. The advance-guard was cut to pieces in the first scuffle, and then the main armies led by Nasir Khan on one side and Charat Singh on the other came to grips. The Sikhs followed their usual tactics of firing from the distance and then running away to reload their guns, while another body of theirs would come forward to attack from the other side and then disappear in its turn. "What a pity", writes our chief authority, Nur Muhammad, who was himself present in the battle, "that the *ghazis* should be killed by the *kafirs* from a distance. Had there been a hand-to-hand fight, the world would have seen some fun." The battle raged for the whole day and came to halt with the nightfall. Next morning no Sikh was to be seen.

The Shah heard that the Sikhs had moved away to *Chak Guru*, as Amritsar was then called. He resolved to pursue them there and 'slaying the vile dogs to level the *Chak* to the earth'. He had several times done so before, and the Sikhs had as many times risen again and rebuilt their holy place. The Shah this time marched with a light army, unencumbered by any heavy equipment, and still it took him four days to cover 32 miles between Lahore and Amritsar. When he reached *Chak Guru* on 1 December 1764 he did not find any Sikh there, except a few left in charge of the *Akal Takht*: "They were only thirty in number. But they had not a grain of fear about them." They were there 'to sacrifice their lives for the Guru'. And they did so wonderfully, grappling with the *ghazis*, who far outnumbered them, and dying as martyrs. The Afghans destroyed the sacred buildings and returned to Lahore.

The Shah then moved his armies towards Sirhind. On the way he chose to pass through Riarki and the Doaba, the region which was the homeland of the Sikhs and promised much booty. He allowed his crusading troops to plunder the land. They travelled slowly, reaching Batala, a distance of 56 miles in 15 days. The entire country was ransacked. The people to this day repeat a saying which was current in those days: "The only property we hold is what we put into our stomachs; the rest belongs to Ahmad Shah." "Whichever way the

¹⁷³ Qanungo, *History of the Jats*, 174-76. Nur-ud-din (tr. J. N. Sarkar), *Islamic Culture*, October, 1933, 692-99.

(Afghan) army turned, the people were massacred in broad daylight. No distinction was made between Sikhs and non-Sikhs. The people ran away and hid themselves wherever they could. Nobody can count the number of things that fell into the hands of the crusaders. Whether men or beasts, all fed upon nothing but sugar-candy and sugar-cane. The stomachs of all, big and small, slaves and slave-girls, were filled with these four things—beef, sugar-cane, sugar-candy and sesame." Ravaging and plundering in this way, the Afghan army crossed the Beas, and then the Sutlej, with some skirmishes with the Sikhs on the way.

The idea of going to Sirhind or following the Sikhs was given up, and the Shah was so pleased with the nature of the country that he spent two months in hunting and enjoying himself in Pinjaur and other places, until he reached Kunjpura towards the end of February 1765. There a council was held to consider the future line of action. Nasir Khan was for advancing to Delhi, where, he said, they could get together all the armies of Najib-ud-daulah (now free from the attacks of Jawahir Singh), Shuja-ud-daulah, the chiefs of Delhi, the Jats and the Marathas for the purpose of giving a crushing blow to the Sikhs. In his opinion, 'the hare of a country could be caught only by a dog of the same country.' This proposal itself shows that the invaders felt the inadequacy of their own resources and were not feeling equal to the task of subduing the Sikhs. The Abdali's officers, who knew their inability to stand the glare and heat of the coming season, disagreed with the suggestion of the Baluch chief and advised the Shah to return to Kabul for the present and to come back after four months. This advice was accepted; the army was ordered to march back. Another fact which might have influenced this decision was the return of 15,000 Sikhs from Delhi, where they had been fighting on the side of the Jats against Najib-ud-daulah, and now, peace having been made, the parties were free to return home.

From Kunjpura Ahmad Shah reached Sirhind in three or four days. The city, as described by Nur Muhammad, was in ruins: but being in the territory of Patiala, it became the scene of a meeting between Ala Singh and his suzerain lord. The Durrani, who was shocked at the sight of destruction, enquired of Ala Singh how the once magnificent city had come to that pass. The Sikh chief told him that it had been destroyed by the Sikhs, who were incorrigible. He had tried several times to dissuade them by fighting and punishing them, but they did not care. People joined their ranks in increasing numbers. If one of them died, two more would come to take his place. Such is the boon granted to them by the Guru. "If Your Majesty were to confer

the territory of Sirhind on me", he said, "I would soon repopulate it better than ever before, but for that I should be excused one year's revenue."

The Shah knew that no governor other than a Sikh could hold the land and pay him so handsomely. Ala Singh had proved his worth. He was a big *zamindar*, a good ruler and a strong and resourceful general. The Shah treated him with respect and granted him the title of raja and a *khilat*. He also bestowed on him a drum and banner as the insignia of royalty. Ala Singh in return undertook to pay an annual tribute of 3½ lakhs.¹⁷⁴

If the other Sikh chiefs had submitted to the Shah on such terms, they would have been similarly accommodated. But the Sikhs were not inclined to accept sovereignty from the hands of a foreigner, much less from a man who had desecrated their temples and had killed their women and children. They spurned the offers of compromise and preferred to continue the struggle for complete freedom. They even punished Ala Singh for having offered his submission to the foreigner.¹⁷⁵

The Shah recrossed the Sutlej at Ropar and entered the Doab. He had hardly gone a mile when his advance-guard was set upon by the Sikhs. He at once ordered his armies to get ready for a fight. With himself in the centre, he placed Shah Wali Khan, Jahan Khan and others with 12,000 men on the right and Nasir Khan with an equal number of his Baluchis on the left. The Sikhs, on the other side, also arranged themselves in a regular battle array. The two Jassa Singhs were in the centre, while Charat Singh Sukarchakia commanded the right, along with Jhanda Singh and Lehna Singh Bhangis and Jai Singh Kanhaiva, and Hari Singh Bhangi, Ram Das, Gulab Singh and Gujjar Singh were on the left. They followed their usual tactics: discharging their guns from a distance and retiring to draw the enemy after them, and wheeling round to fall upon their pursuers. For seven days these skirmishes went on, while the Abdali was heading for the Beas; and then was fought the last battle on the banks of this river, after which the Sikhs retired as if to prepare themselves for an Afghan attack on Lahore. The author of the *Jangnama* witnessed so much valour on the part of the Sikhs that for once he restrained himself from hurling abuses on them; instead he praised them unhesitatingly. "Do not call them dogs", he says, "because they are lions, and show bravery like lions in the field. If you wish to learn the art of war come

174 *Jangnama*, 125-28. *Risala-i-Nanak Shah*, 135. *Tariikh-i-Pattala*, 62. Karam Singh, *Ala Singh*, 241.

175 *Tariikh-i-Pattala*, 57-59. *Ala Singh*, 246-47.

face to face with them in battle . . . The body of every one of them is like a piece of rock, and in physical grandeur every one of them is equal to more than fifty . . . If their armies take to flight, do not think they are running away. It is only a war tactic of theirs.¹⁷⁶

The Shah did not stop at Lahore. He made straight for the frontier, crossing the Chenab and the Jhelum until he came to Rohtas, where he permitted Kabuli Mal to return to Lahore, and bade farewell to his brave ally, Nasir Khan, granting him the territory of Shal now called Quetta. He also wanted to make him a gift of Jhang, Multan and the whole country of the Derajat lying west of the Chenab, but the Khan declined the offer, apparently not having the stomach to hold the territory against the rising power of the Sikhs. When the Baluchis had left for their province, Ahmad Shah also wended his way towards Afghanistan.¹⁷⁷

SIKH OCCUPATION OF LAHORE

After the departure of the Shah at the end of March 1765 the Sikhs assembled at Amritsar, and on the *Baisakhi* day, 10 April, they decided by a *gurmata* to take possession of Lahore. While Kabuli Mal was away at Jammu recruiting a force of Dogras, the Bhangi sardars, Lehna Singh and Gujjar Singh, with 2000 troops, appeared before Lahore. They won over a few gardeners in the fort, and with their help effected entrance through a hole on the night of 16 April. Gujjar Singh was the first to enter. Then followed Lehna Singh. Tara Singh of Mozang rushed out with a band of 25 men and dispersing the half-hearted followers of Amir Singh, the nephew of Kabuli Mal, took him into custody. Early next morning Sobha Singh Kanhaiva of Niazbeg also joined the Bhangi sardars, and the city and its neighbourhood were parcelled out among them. The Khalsa looked upon this achievement as a mark of the Guru's special favour, and when coining money they repeated the inscription which had already appeared on the seals of Banda Singh and the coins of Jassa Singh.

FURTHER CONQUESTS

After the occupation of Lahore the Sikhs extended their territories, each sardar occupying towns and villages according to his capacity. They also decided to invade the territories of Najib-ud-daulah, Ahmad Shah's trusted lieutenant in Delhi.¹⁷⁸ A battle took place between

¹⁷⁶ *Jangnāma*, 158.

¹⁷⁷ *Jangnāma*, 129-78. Ali-nd-din, 278. Khushwaqt Rai, 80-81.

¹⁷⁸ SPD, XXIX, 99, 102. *Calendar of Persian Correspondence*, II, 2735, 2735A; 2735C, 2735D.

the Sikhs and Najib-ud-daulah near Shamli, 12 miles east of Karnal in December 1765. A vivid picture of this battle is found in the pages of Nur-ud-din, the Ruhela chief's biographer. After a protracted contest the Sikhs crossed the Jamuna under cover of darkness.¹⁷⁹ Then they advanced towards Delhi, the *Budha Dal* and the *Taruna Dal* combining their forces. Pursued by Najib-ud-daulah, the Sikhs entered into an alliance with Jawahar Singh Jat and they jointly plundered the territory of Madho Singh of Jaipur. The Sikhs also helped Jawahar Singh against the Marathas and took part in the battle of Dholpur in March 1766.¹⁸⁰ Soon afterwards the Sikhs again plundered Najib-ud-daulah's territory, but they were defeated by him in April 1766.¹⁸¹

On their return from the country across the Jamuna the Sikhs sent two important expeditions, one under Hari Singh Nakai against Pakpattan, and the other against Multan under the Bhangi sardars. The expedition against Pakpattan resulted in Hari Singh's death and the defeat of the Sikhs, but Pakpattan was soon afterwards captured by the Bhangi sardars, Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh. Then they marched upon Multan which, however, they could not occupy.¹⁸²

EIGHTH EXPEDITION OF ABDALI

In November 1766 Ahmad Shah Abdali invaded India again. He defeated the Sikhs severely in a battle at Behgy (Taraki?) about 10 *kos* from Rohtas on the other bank of the Jhelum.¹⁸³ As he approached Lahore, the fort and town were deserted by the Sikhs under Sobha Singh, Lehna Singh, Gujjar Singh and Hira Singh who were there with 8000 horse. But 40,000 Sikhs hovered round the Afghan camp under the leadership of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, they, however, never came to a close engagement.¹⁸⁴

Ahmad Shah came to Lahore towards the end of December 1766. On 17 January 1767 his general Jahan Khan was wounded and defeated by the Sikhs near Amritsar.¹⁸⁵ Meanwhile the Shah himself had marched from Lahore towards Sirhind, where he reached in March or April 1767. On his way he was continuously harassed by the Sikhs who, as usual, carefully avoided open engagements. He was joined

¹⁷⁹ Nur-ud-din, 100b-106a. SPD, XXIX, 102.

¹⁸⁰ SPD, XIX, 102, 121, 126, 177, 197. Nur-ud-din, 106b-107.

¹⁸¹ Nur-ud-din, 108ab, 109. *Delhi Chronicle*, 207-8.

¹⁸² *Montgomery Gazetteer*, 31-32. *Multan Gazetteer*, 27.

¹⁸³ CPC, II, 16A.

¹⁸⁴ CPC, II, 86, 106A.

¹⁸⁵ CPC, II, 65.

by Najib-ud-daulah at Ambala. The crafty Ruhela chief wanted Sirhind for his son Zabita Khan, but the Abdali gave it to Amar Singh of Patiala, who also received the title of *Raja-i-Rajagan*. Probably Ahmad Shah was convinced that none but a Sikh chief could keep the trans-Sutlej Sikhs under control.¹⁸⁶

From Sirhind the Abdali went to Machhiwara *ghat* on the bank of the Sutlej. Several expeditions were sent in pursuit of the Sikhs, but no decisive result could be obtained. The Sikhs continued to ravage Najib-ud-daulah's territory. Oppressed by the burning heat of the Punjab and exhausted by the endless Sikh war, Ahmad Shah left India in the summer of 1767.¹⁸⁷

SIKH RULE FROM DOAB TO ATTOCK

As soon as the Abdali had turned his back, the Sikhs reoccupied Lahore and began to extend their authority on all sides. Gujjar Singh seized the Gakkhar country and his deputy, Milkha Singh Thепuria, fixed his headquarters at Rawalpindi.¹⁸⁸ Budh Singli Singhpuria defeated Shaikh Nizam-ud-din of Jullundur and captured several *parganahs* (including Jullundur) yielding 2 lakhs a year.¹⁸⁹

The Sikhs invaded the Gangetic Doab in December 1767. They were resisted by Najib-ud-daulah who defeated them at Islamnagar in the Saharanpur district and compelled them to retreat. But the Sikhs could not be beaten, and soon afterwards threatened Delhi itself. Najib-ud-daulah confessed his helplessness and withdrew his troops from Delhi, leaving the imperial city and the imperial family to their fate.¹⁹⁰ He was defeated by the Sikhs for the last time in December 1768.¹⁹¹

Ahmad Shah came as far as the Chenab in 1768 and to Peshawar in 1769, but he had to retreat owing to the recalcitrance of his own troops. He died in 1772. His son and successor Timur Shah gave up the old policy of trying to crush the Sikhs. Najib-ud-daulah had also died in October 1770. The Sikhs used this respite for the extension and consolidation of their power. In the early seventies the political authority of the Sikhs extended from Saharanpur in the east to

¹⁸⁶ CPC, II, 52, 79, 107C, 107D, 130A, 139, 213, 214, 234, 254, 288, 310, 323, 415. Nur-ud-din, 109b, 110a. *Delhi Chronicle*, 211. *Husain Shahi*, 85. Khushwaqt Rai, 168.

¹⁸⁷ CPC, II, 310, 377, 393, 412, 415, 513, 1365. Miskin, 287-88. Nur-ud-din, 111-12, 112B.

¹⁸⁸ *Rawalpindi Gazetteer*, 38-39.

¹⁸⁹ *Raj Khalsa*, 48.

¹⁹⁰ CPC, II, 776, 835, 847, 1101. *Calcutta Review*, 1875, 28-29.

¹⁹¹ SPD, XXIX, 223.

Attock in the west, and from Multan in the south to Kangra and Jammu in the north.

Writing from Pondicherry in 1784 to a French minister in Paris, Bussy observed that the Sikhs were 'masters of the country which lies between Delhi and the empire of Persia'. The emergence of the Sikhs as a territorial power synchronized with their organization into *Misl*s or confederacies. The Bhangi *Misl*, founded by Chhaja Singh of Panjwar, attained prominence under Hari Singh, Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh. Once this *Misl* seemed likely to unite the whole of the trans-Sutlej Punjab under its sway, but it succumbed before the aggressions of the Sukarchakia *Misl*. The Ahluwalia *Misl*, founded by Jassa Singh, had its headquarters at Kapurthala. The Fyzullapuria *Misl* was founded by Nawab Kapur Singh. The Ramgarhia *Misl* was founded by Jassa Singh of Ichogill, who in his later years pursued the career of a free-booter in the Cis-Sutlej region. The Kanhaiya *Misl* was led by Jai Singh. The Sukarchakia *Misl*, founded by Charat Singh, created the Sikh monarchy under his grandson Ranjit Singh. The Nakai *Misl*, which controlled the region southwest of Lahore, was very powerful in the days of its leader Ran Singh. The most noteworthy chief of the Dalewalia *Misl* was Tara Singh Ghaiba. The Karora Singhia *Misl*, founded by Karora Singh, had territories in the Cis-Sutlej region and also in the Jullundur Doab. The Shahid or Nihang *Misl* the Nishānānwālīā *Misl* and the Phulkiani *Misl* had their territories in the Cis-Sutlej region. After the destruction of the power of the Afghans these *Misl*s at times quarrelled among themselves and paved the way for the rise of the Sikh monarchy in the early years of the nineteenth century.

CHAPTER NINE

THE RAJPUT STATES

(1712-1772)

RAJPUTS AND MUGHAL EMPIRE

THE LONG PERIOD of Mughal suzerainty over Rajputana may be said to have begun in the year 1562, when Bihari Mal of Amber offered his daughter in marriage to Akbar.¹ That suzerainty was virtually dissolved during the reign of Muhammad Shah (1719-48) as a result of the lowering of the imperial prestige to a large extent by the invasion of Nadir Shah as also because of the successive Maratha incursions under Baji Rao I and his successor. Naturally many far-reaching changes occurred in Rajputana in consequence of her long contact with the Mughal empire.

When Mewar lost her age-long pre-eminence owing to her fruitless struggle with the Mughal rulers, her place was taken by Amber and Marwar, for, their princes rendered conspicuous services to the empire for about two centuries. As the rana, in sullen resentment, kept himself at a distance from the splendour of Delhi and Agra even after the treaty with Jahangir (1615), he missed the advantages which fell to the lot of successful courtiers like Mirza Raja Jai Singh of Amber and Jaswant Singh of Marwar. As Sir J. N. Sarkar observes, "The Maharana of Udaipur, in spite of his pre-eminent descent, was a negligible factor of the Hindu population of the Mughal world, as he hid himself among his mountain fastnesses and never appeared in the Mughal court or camp."² Thus in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries we find the princes of Amber and Marwar playing leading roles in the imperial court and the rana of Mewar being steadily pushed into the background. In 1794 an English observer recorded: "The court of Jaipur, by its assiduity and the services which it rendered to that of Delhi by contributing to its strength, had the precedence and the right of mediation above all the other Indian courts before the Mughal Emperor..."³

1 See *Proceedings of Rajasthan History Congress*, 1967, 49-55.

2 *History of Aurangzib*, III, 324.

3 J. Pillet's Memoir on Jaipur (*Peona Residency Correspondence*, VIII, 2).

Apart from this change in the balance of political importance among the existing states, the Mughal period also witnessed the emergence of new states in Rajputana. Bundi and Kotah separated from each other in 1624 during the reign of Jahangir. The three small principalities of Banswara, Pertabgarh and Dungarpur were offshoots of Mewar; but they continued till the last quarter of the eighteenth century to acknowledge the suzerainty of the ranas.⁴

The influence of the Mughal supremacy did not extend only to the larger political issues, it permeated the internal administration of the states as well. "The autocracy at the imperial capital supplied the incentive to the (Rajput) Prince to play the autocrat in his more limited sphere of action."⁵ Originally every Rajput state belonged to one particular clan, which under the pressure of historical circumstances was organised into a single unit. "The humblest members of the clan considered themselves along with the Ruler as the sons of the same father, enjoying their patrimony by the same right as the Ruler himself. The latter was thus nothing but *primus inter pares*... The State in fact did not belong to the Ruler—it belonged to the clan as a whole."⁶ In August 1821 'the expatriated chiefs of Marwar' submitted a letter to the British Political Agent in which they stated: "Sri Maharaja and ourselves are of one stock, all Rathors. He is our head, we his servants: but now anger has seized him, and we are dispossessed of our country... when our services are acceptable, then is he our lord; when not, we are again his brothers and kindred, claimants and laying claim to the land."⁷

But this concept of the state was substantially modified as a result of the contact with the Mughals. Ambitious princes anxious to imitate the Mughal pattern of autocracy naturally tried to undermine the strength of the clan system. The nobles, who were the traditional representatives and spokesmen of their clans, found their privileges curtailed and their possessions confiscated. Tod observes with regard to Udai Singh of Marwar, whose sister Jodh Bai had been married to Akbar: "With the aid of his imperial brother-in-law, he greatly diminished the power of the feudal aristocracy, and clipped the wings of almost all the greater vassals; while he made numerous sequestrations of the lands of the ancient allodiality and lesser vassals; so that it is stated, that, either by new settlement or confisca-

⁴ A. C. Banerjee, *The Rajput States and the East India Company*, 420-50.

⁵ S. C. Dutt, "Rajput Polity", *The Guardian*, 27 August 1931.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Tod, *Sketch of a Feudal System in Rajasthan*, Appendix, No. 1. See *Proceedings of the Rajasthan History Congress*, 1969, 81-88.

tion, he added fourteen hundred villages to the fisc.⁸ The nobles no longer found it possible to exercise their traditional right of revolt, for the princes might fall back upon imperial support for the preservation of internal order in their states.

One of the measures adopted by the Rajput princes to weaken the clan system was to introduce within their respective states some nobles who were 'foreign in country and blood' (i.e. nobles belonging to other clans and originally living in other states). "Chiefs of the Rahtore, Chohan, Paramara, Solanki, and Bhatti tribes were intermingled." The epithet of *kala puta*, or 'black grant', was applied by the local people to all grants of land to 'foreign' nobles. As it was 'virtually a grant resumable' the position of those who held it was naturally less secure than that of the nobles of the indigenous clan; they were specially dependent upon royal favour. The prince could place more reliance on outsiders having no root in the soil than on those whose rights were rooted in the clan system. Of the eighteen chief nobles of Mewar mentioned by Tod, as many as nine were 'foreign in country and blood', and from one of them the rana could command four thousand Rathors holding lands on the tenure of service. Although the clan system was too strong to be completely wiped off, in the seventeenth century the princes were able to get rid of some of the restraints from which they had suffered during the pre-Mughal period.⁹ In Tod's days the prince was much more than the nominal leader of his clan. He observes, "Throughout Rajasthan the character and welfare of the States depend on that of the sovereign; he is the mainspring of the system—the active power to set and keep in motion all these discordant materials; if he relax, each part separates, and moves in a narrow sphere of its own."¹⁰

In Mewar, however, the contact with the Mughals was different in character and produced different results. In pre-Mughal times it was the custom to change the estates of the nobles after every few years, so that none of them might acquire strong local attachment. They remained at the rana's court and tried to please him, for it was to him that they looked for preferment and promotion. During the long struggle against the Mughal empire this system was changed in a way favourable to the nobles. The ranas were on numerous occasions driven from the plains and compelled to take refuge in hills. During this period of distress they could not transfer the nobles from one estate to another, for most of the estates in the

⁸ *Annals of Mārvār*, Chapter IV.

⁹ For details see Tod, *Sketch of a Feudal System in Rajasthan*.

¹⁰ *Annals of Mewār*, Chapter XIV.

plains were virtually under the control of the Mughal garrisons scattered over the country. On the conclusion of permanent peace with the Mughal government in 1615 most of the nobles found themselves in possession of fixed estates, from which the ranas could no longer dislodge them. Moreover, the gallantry and self-sacrifice of the nobles in the long war against the Mughals induced the grateful princes to load them with honours and to increase their possessions. Thus in the seventeenth century the position of the nobility became stronger than ever before. Secondly, the increase of material possessions was accompanied by a simultaneous promotion in rank and honour. Captain Brookes wrote in 1859, "In Durbar, they (*i.e.* the nobles) take rank above the heir-apparent, a custom unprecedented in India, and granted in consequence of the heir-apparent having attended the Emperor's court. When a chief enters the presence (of the rana), the entire court, including the prince rises to receive him..."¹¹

Tod says, "The annals of Mewar seldom exhibit those unnatural contentions for power, from which no other Hindu State was exempt; this was owing to the wholesome regulation of not investing the princes of the blood with any political authority; and establishing as a counterpoise to natural advantages, an artificial degradation of their rank which placed them beneath the sixteen chief nobles of the state; which, while it exalted these in their own estimation, lessened the national humiliation, when the heirs-apparent were compelled to lead their quota in the *arrière-ban* of the empire."¹²

MEWAR IN DECLINE

The weakness of Mewar in the eighteenth century was largely due to the character and policy of her sovereigns. Tod says, "The reigns of Raj Singh and Jay Singh illustrate the obvious truth, that on the personal character of the chief of a feudal government everything depends. The former, infusing by his talent and energy patriotic sentiments into all his subordinates, vanquished in a series of conflicts the vast military resources of the empire, led by the emperor, his sons, and chosen generals; while his successor, heir to this moral strength, and with every collateral aid, lowered her to a stage of contempt from which no talent could subsequently raise her." Jai

¹¹ *History of Mewar*, 55-58. When Amar Singh concluded peace with Jahangir it was stipulated that the rana would be represented at the imperial court by his eldest son. It was a special favour granted by the emperor to the ruler of Mewar, for all other Rajput rulers were required to attend the Mughal court in person. Still Mewar considered this obligation so humiliating that the heir-apparent was degraded in his own capital.

¹² *Annals of Mewar*, Chapter XIV.

Singh's son and successor, Amar Singh II, is described by Tod as 'an active and high-minded prince, who well upheld his station and the prosperity of his country, notwithstanding the anarchy of the period.' Although he failed to take advantage of the crisis which convulsed the Mughal empire after Aurangzib's death, he was a careful administrator, and we are told that "his encouragement of agriculture and protection of manufactures are displayed in the edicts engraved on pillars".¹³

Amar Singh II was succeeded in 1710 by Sangram Singh II, who ruled over Mewar till his death in 1733. Tod describes him as "a patriarchal ruler, wise, just, and inflexible, steady in his application to business, regulating public and private expenditure, and even the sumptuary laws". Several anecdotes related by Tod illustrate these peculiarities of the rana's character. Internal consolidation rather than the exploitation of larger political opportunities arising out of the disintegration of the Mughal empire claimed his attention. As Tod says, "his policy was too circumscribed, and his country would have benefited more by a surrender of some of those antique prejudices which kept her back in the general scramble for portions of the dilapidated monarchy of the Moguls". He was not strong or farsighted enough to reverse the policy which his ancestors had pursued for more than a century and a half. He kept himself aloof from the Mughal court in the same way as they had done, even though the decline of the empire under Aurangzib's unworthy successors offered opportunities for aggrandizement which they had never found, but which the contemporary rulers of Amber and Marwar were fully exploiting. "Rajasthan", says Tod, "benefited by the demolition of the empire: to all but Mewar it yielded an extension of power." The explanation is to be found primarily in the short-sighted policy of the rulers of the state which was 'too isolated for the times' and 'clung to forms and unsubstantial homage'. Constantly in dread of 'amalgamation with the imperial court' the proud Guhilots refused to 'plunge into the tortuous policy' of Delhi as their neighbours did, thereby forfeiting opportunities to enlarge their territorial boundaries.¹⁴

This unwise policy of isolation, sanctioned, if not enforced, by tradition, was fully in keeping with the personal character of the rulers of Mewar in the eighteenth century. Its abandonment was rendered impossible by another important factor: the growing power of the nobility. Some of the causes which contributed to the growth of this disintegrating factor in the political life of Mewar have been noted

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid, Chapter XV

above. The nobles began to strengthen themselves by building forts within their estates. Formerly the erection of local fortifications was not allowed; the hills served as fortresses for the fighters, while the frontier strongholds provided shelter for the nobles' families in time of invasion. "As the Mogul power waned, the general defensive system was abandoned, while the predatory warfare which succeeded compelled them to stud their country with castles, in order to shelter their effects from the Mahratta and Pathan, and in later times to protect rebels."¹⁵

The growing power of the nobility naturally stimulated factious spirit and sectional jealousy. The old feuds between the Chundawats and the Saktawats became more bitter than ever before, and made it very difficult for Mewar to pursue policies of expansion which demanded internal unity. The head of the Chundawat clan was the *rawat* of Salumbar, who occupied the position of the premier noble of Mewar. He was the direct descendant of Chunda, the eldest son of rana Lakha, who had surrendered his claim to the throne in favour of his younger brother Mokal in the fifteenth century. In renouncing his lawful right to succession Chunda had retained for his descendants the right to advise the rana on all important matters of state and to hold the principal place in the ruler's council.¹⁶ This peculiar position of the *rawat* of Salumbar raised difficult problems. The extent of his powers and privileges was undefined, and the rana naturally tried to free himself from this thraldom. For generations the rulers and the *rawats* were on bad terms but the old custom was so strong that the chief of Salumbar could not be deprived of his inherited privileges.¹⁷ Next in importance to the Chundawat nobles were the Saktawats, the descendants of rana Pratap Singh's brother, Sakta Singh. The ranas usually supported

15 Ibid.

16 This somewhat extraordinary relationship between the ruler and one of the nobles was not peculiar to Mewar. "In each Rajpoot family and even in each Bhel Pal (*i.e.* village), especially in case of incompetency in the head, there is a 'Bhaujgurree' who is consulted in all important transactions and without whose advice nothing is undertaken" (Brookes, *History of Mewar*, 54-55). This custom prevailed also in Central India (Malcolm, *Memoir of Central India*, I, 549). It seems, however, that while in Mewar the office of the *Bhaujgurree* was strictly hereditary, in other states and estates it was not so.

17 In 1818, when a treaty between Mewar and the East India Company was being drawn up, the rana's agent, who was a relative of the *rawat* of Salumbar, wanted to introduce a clause guaranteeing the position of *Bhaujgurree* to the Chundawat chief. Metcalfe merely gave an assurance that "the good conduct of the minister would ensure His Lordship's (*i.e.* Governor-General's) approbation". Thus the old custom failed to survive Mewar's submission to the British. See A. C. Banerjee, *The Rajput States and the East India Company*, 249.

the Saktawats in order to balance the power of the Chundawats. During the last quarter of the eighteenth century the bitter feud between these two powerful families created anarchy and confusion in Mewar and was largely responsible for the depredations of the Marathas.¹⁸

During the reign of Sangram Singh II we may trace the beginnings of those symptoms of internal disintegration which gradually paralysed Mewar and made her an easy prey to the Marathas and the Pindaris. Had his character been strong enough to deal firmly with the growing elements of defiance and disorder, the history of Mewar might have been different. He was assisted by an able minister named Beharidas Pancholi, who retained his office during three reigns. Tod says that "numerous autograph letters of all the princes of his time attest his talent and his work as the oracle of the period".¹⁹ But even this 'oracle' failed to pursue a vigorous policy; presumably his hands were tied by the limitations of the ruler's character and the clan feuds within the state. However, it was under the watchful management of Sangram Singh II and Beharidas Pancholi that Mewar recovered the greater portion of her lost territory. Her ambition was modest, she desired the recovery of control of her 'ancient feudatories' of Abu and Idar as also the petty states which grew out of her Dungarnur and Banswara. It is also probable that the rana's control was re-established over the *panchahs* of Pur Mandal and Bednore, which had been transferred to the imperial domains during the reign of Aurangzib.

MARWAR : AJIT SINGH

From Mewar we turn to Marwar. Ajit Singh who was the centre of Marwar's thirty years' war against the Mughals, was a 'prince of great vigour of mind as well as of frame'. Unlike the rulers of Mewar, he was deeply involved 'in all the intrigues and changes amongst the occupants of Timoor's throne' from Farrukh-sivar to Muhammad Shah. There is no evidence to justify Tod's conclusion that he 'inherited an invincible hatred to the very name of Moslem'. In playing his role in imperial politics he showed neither consistency nor far-sighted statesmanship. In domestic issues he betrayed his lack of generosity. Even Rajput tradition could not entirely obliterate the memory of his ill treatment of Durgadas, the loyal and valiant chief to whom Marwar largely owed her salvation in the long struggle against Aurangzib. Tod does not make an over-estimate of Durgadas when he says, "He, who by repeated instances of exalted self-denial, had

¹⁸ *Annals of Mewar*, Chapter XVII.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, Chapter XV.

refused wealth and honours that might have raised himself from his vassal condition to an equality with his sovereign, was banished from the land which his integrity, wisdom, and valour had preserved."²⁰ Perhaps the following Muslim view of Ajit Singh's character contains some element of truth: "He was exceedingly wanting in good faith, breaker of his oath, one who had slain unfairly many of his relations and dependants. Among his evil deeds was the abandonment of Farrukh-siyar to his fate, in spite of his relationship through his daughter; nay, he took an active part in that Emperor's dethronement, in the end he attained the reward for his misdeeds."²¹

Ajit Singh's career was closely linked at every stage with the history of the Mughal empire. He made his final peace with Bahadur Shah in June 1710; but he openly defied imperial authority during the confusion which followed the emperor's death. He stopped cow-killing in his state, expelled the imperial officers from Jodhpur, invaded the imperial territory and occupied Ajmer. The imperial forces were too busy during the troubled reign of Jahandar Shah to take proper notice of these encroachments in Rajputana. After the accession of Farrukh-sivar it was decided that a campaign against Ajit Singh should be undertaken without delay. Probably the emperor himself would have led the expedition in person if illness had not prevented him. The task was entrusted to Savvid Husain Ali Khan, who left Delhi at the head of a powerful army in January 1714. The imperial troops advanced as far as Merta (in Marwar) and occupied it. Ajit Singh fell back upon the desert, leaving his subjects unprotected. In spite of many difficulties—especially the want of water, grain and grass—Husain Ali decided to make a forced march on Jodhpur. While he was on his way to the capital of Marwar Ajit Singh's envoys visited him and asked for peace. According to one authority, Ajit Singh gave up the struggle on the advice of Sawai Jai Singh of Amber. Tod says that Ajit Singh was guided by his ministers and bards. Be that as it may, peace was concluded in March 1714. Ajit Singh agreed to give one of his daughters in marriage to the emperor, to send his son Abhai Singh to the imperial court, and to attend the court in person when summoned.

Historians writing from the imperial point of view naturally represent such anti-Mughal outbursts of the Rajputs as rebellions and cannot discover any explanation other than perfidy. But it is necessary to remember that Aurangzib's policy had created an atmosphere of distrust, in which neither the Mughals nor the Rajputs could continue

²⁰ *Annals of Marwar, Chapter IX.*

²¹ *Irvine, Later Mughals, II, 117.*

the tradition established by Akbar. Kamwar Khan, the historian, tells us that when Ajit Singh and Sawai Jai Singh came to make their submission to Bahadur Shah in June 1710, all the hills and plains round the imperial camp were full of Rajputs, although the emperor had guaranteed the personal safety of the two princes. Treachery was apprehended, and precautions were taken, because the shadow of Aurangzib still hovered over Rajputana. Indeed, the Rajputs felt that there was no longer any honoured place for them at the imperial court, perhaps not even an assurance of personal safety for their chiefs. So rebellion and intrigue took the place of that steady loyalty which had been one of the pillars of the Mughal empire in the days of Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Jahan. In such circumstances submissions and reconciliations could not but be half-hearted.

It may be asked why the Rajputs did not make a concerted attempt to win real independence, if not to overthrow the Mughal empire, if they were restless under the new system inaugurated by Aurangzib. Some explanations may be suggested, although the sources of information so far explored do not allow us to be dogmatic on this subject. In the first place, although it is now clear to us that the decay of the Mughal empire had begun in the later years of Aurangzib's life, yet it is safe to assume that the silent approach of the catastrophe was not clear to the contemporaries. The power, majesty and grandeur of the past still clouded their vision, and they could not think of a political system which did not revolve round the Peacock Throne. That even the Marathas could not take a more farsighted and dispassionate view is clear from Shahu's treaty with Farrukh-sivar and Baji Rao's unwillingness to threaten Delhi. It is, therefore, not unnatural that the Rajputs, closely associated with the Mughal empire for more than a century and a half, should have tried to build up their political future on the assumption that the Timurids would continue to hold the same imperial position as they had held since the sixteenth century. So the Rajput princes took advantage of the decline of the Mughals to a very limited extent only; they tried to seize portions of imperial domains contiguous to their territories, but the bold idea of subverting the Mughal empire itself never crossed their minds. Secondly, the clan system still shaped the political ideas of the Rajputs, although they had established long and intimate contact with a vast imperial structure in which clans, races and religions lay submerged. The outlook of the Rajputs was essentially parochial. It was not possible for them to forget their clan traditions—traditions of isolation, rivalry and conflict—in order to make a concerted attempt for the subversion of the Mughal empire and to raise a similar political structure on its ruins. They looked

upon political unity as improper subordination of one clan to another.²² Unity, therefore, was out of the question, and without unity there could be no exalted political future for the petty principalities of Rajputana.

These assumptions may explain some aspects of Ajit Singh's restless manoeuvres and shifty intrigues. His daughter (whose name was probably Bai Indar Kunwar) was married to Farrukh-siyar in December 1715. This marriage enabled Ajit Singh to play a decisive part in the sickening drama which developed as a result of Farrukh-siyar's rupture with the Sayyid brothers. Their high-handed conduct and scarcely veiled defiance of the emperor naturally exasperated him. After his failure to seize Sayyid Husain Ali in August 1718 Farrukh-Siyar turned to his father-in-law for support against the over-powerful ministers. Ajit Singh was sent for, but the emperor unwisely used as intermediary a man named Nahar Khan, who was secretly connected with the Sayyids. Nahar Khan persuaded Ajit Singh to join the Sayyids against the emperor. On his arrival in Delhi Ajit Singh openly made himself an ally of the Sayyids. The emperor was deposed in February 1719, and murdered two months later. Ajit Singh, whose complicity in this crime was well-known to the public, was nicknamed *damad kush* (slaver of his son-in-law). He was, however, conciliated by the Sayyids, who allowed him to send his daughter (Farrukh-siyar's widow) to Jodhpur, after her re-conversion to Hinduism, with a fabulous sum of money, although orthodox Muslims protested against this unusual procedure. This was not the only reward which Ajit Singh received for the inglorious part he had played. He retained the viceroyalty of Gujarat which he already held, excluding sarkar Sorath which was transferred to Sawai Jai Singh; as compensation he received 'the whole of Ajmer'.²³ This happened after Muhammad Shah's accession.

The fall of the Sayyids in 1720 naturally affected Ajit Singh's position at the imperial court. As he refused to reconcile himself with the new wazir, Itimad-ul-daulah, and forbade the slaughter of cows within the provinces of Gujarat and Ajmer, it was decided to take speedy steps for his suppression. But no one could restore the old energy and efficiency of the imperial administration; the machine had

22 During Sangram Singh's contest with Bahur the clan system affected the unity of the Raiputs. Bahur says, "...the rajas and ravis of high degree, who obeyed him in this battle, and the governors and commanders who were amongst his followers in this conflict, had not obeyed him in any earlier fight or, out of regard to their own dignity, been friendly with him" (Beveridge, *Bahur-nama*, 561-62). See A. C. Banerjee, *Medieval Studies*, 64-65.

23 Irvine, *Later Mughals*, II, 4.

gone out of gear. In October 1721 Haidar Quli Khan was appointed subahdar of Ahmadabad and Sayyid Muzaffar Ali Khan was sent to dislodge Ajit Singh from Ajmer. On his failure to accomplish his task he was superseded by Sayyid Nusrat Yar Khan Barha. Ajit Singh received a Jat contingent from Churaman, which was commanded by the latter's son Muhammed Singh. Ajit Singh's son, Abhai Singh, plundered Narnol, Alwar, Shahjahanpur and some other places in the provinces of Delhi and Agra. All imperial generals of the front rank appeared unwilling to take charge of the campaign against the dreaded Rathors. But in March 1722 Ajit Singh sent an envoy to Delhi to sue for peace. Irvine suggests that the cause of this change of policy on his part was the knowledge that Nizam-ul-mulk had accepted the office of wazir and had left for Delhi.²⁴

The emperor confirmed Ajit Singh in the viceroyalty of Ajmer (the viceroyalty of Gujarat had already been taken away from him); but, true to Aurangzib's policy of distrust, he appointed Nahar Khan to be diwan of that province and faujdar of Sambhar with a status almost equal to that of the nazim (December 1722). Friction between Ajit Singh and Nahar Khan was inevitable. Within two months of his appointment Nahar Khan was murdered by the Rajputs. An imperial force under the command of Sharf-ul-daulah Iradatmand Khan was sent against Ajit Singh, who, as usual, avoided open contest. Ajmer was occupied by the imperial troops under Haidar Quli Khan, the newly appointed viceroy of that province, in June 1723. Ajit Singh again sued for peace through Abhai Singh who was well-received at the imperial court, but detained there.

A year later, in June 1724, Ajit Singh was murdered by his second son, Bakht Singh. This murder is described by Tod as the foulest crime in the annals of Rajasthan.²⁵ According to him, it was instigated by Abhai Singh; his ambition to seize his father's throne was excited by the Sayyid brothers, who sought to punish Ajit Singh for his opposition to the dethronement of Farrukh-siyar. Bakht Singh is said to have been allured by the promise of Nagour and its 300 townships. Although the Rajput tradition accepted by Tod is supported by the Muslim historian Warid, Irvine has conclusively proved that it deserves no credence.²⁶ The motives ascribed to Abhai Singh and Bakht Singh are obviously inadequate. Abhai Singh would have succeeded his father in due course, and Bakht Singh would have been entitled to an appanage (like Nagour) by universal Rajput

²⁴ *Ibid.*, II, 111.

²⁵ *Annals of Marwar*, Chapter IX. Some Rajput chronicles such as *Surya Prakna* are discreetly silent about the causes of this murder.

²⁶ *Latter Mughals*, II, 115-16.

'practice' whenever his elder brother ascended the throne. Again, one of the Sayyids died in 1720, another in 1722; how could they instigate Abhai Singh to murder his father in 1724? Moreover, Ajit Singh had steadfastly supported them against Farrukh-siyar, and, therefore, there is no reason to assume that they had any grudge against their faithful ally.

Although we are thus compelled to dismiss as worthless Tod's version of this incident, it is not easy to follow Irvine in his acceptance of Kamwar Khan's statement that Ajit Singh had mortally offended Bakht Singh by dishonouring the latter's wife. Ajit Singh's character was certainly not an ideal one; but there is no evidence, apart from this hostile source, showing that he was a moral wreck devoid of all normal feelings. It seems best to say that, in the present state of our knowledge, no positive conclusion about the cause of Ajit Singh's murder is possible.

MARWAR: ABHAI SINGH

Ajit Singh was succeeded by Abhai Singh, who ruled over Marwar till his death in 1749. Like his father he also played an important part in imperial affairs. His exploits began with the conquest of Nagour from Indar Singh Rathor, to whom it had been granted by Muhammad Shah in 1723 during Ajit Singh's last rebellion. Nagour was then handed over to Bakht Singh, whose ambitious and 'daring nature' soon turned this appanage into an *imperium in imperio*.

Five years after his accession Abhai Singh was appointed viceroy of Gujarat and directed to defeat and dislodge his dismissed predecessor, Sarbuland Khan. If Rajput tradition recorded by Tod is to be believed, his expeditionary force included contingents provided by the Hadas of Kotah and Bundi, the Khichis of Gagrun, the Gores of Seopur, the Kachhwahs of Amber and even the Sodas of the desert. In October 1730 the Rathor ruler reached Ahmadabad, after wreaking his vengeance upon the ruler of Sirohi, 'who, trusting to his native strength, had spurned every compromise which involved his independence'. After an indecisive battle Sarbuland Khan's army was dispersed; he left Gujarat and Abhai Singh occupied Ahmadabad. Tod echoes the exaggerated songs of the bards and tells us that the victor returned to Jodhpur with "four crores of rupees and one thousand four hundred guns of all calibres, besides military stores of every description" which he utilised later to strengthen his own forts and garrisons.²⁷

But Abhai Singh's triumph in Gujarat did not last long. This pros-

²⁷ *Annals of Marwar*, Chapter V. Account of battle in Irvine, *Lates Mughals*, II, 206-11.

perous Mughal subah had been assigned by the Maratha king Shahu to his senapati Khande Rao Dabhade, as his sphere of activity. Dabhade and his able lieutenant, Pilaji Gaikwad, made serious efforts to consolidate Maratha hold on the province. But the peshwa Baji Rao I also claimed a share, introducing a new ractor in Gujarat affairs. Khande Rao died in 1729 and was succeeded by his son Trimbak Rao. In 1730 the peshwa's brother, Chimmaji Appa, entered Gujarat at the head of a big army and secured from the then subahdar, Sarbuland Khan, the *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* for the subah. This was naturally resented by Trimbak Rao, who tried to secure the support of the nizam against the peshwa. To prevent their union Baji Rao advanced into Khandesh in October 1730. Abhai Singh had to face this crisis immediately after his assumption of the government of Gujarat. The peshwa met him in February 1731. It was agreed that the peshwa would accept 13 lakhs of rupees annually in lieu of *chauth* and expel Pilaji Gaikwad from Gujarat. A few weeks later (1 April 1731) Trimbak Rao was defeated and killed by the peshwa in the battle of Dabhoi. This, however, did not improve the position of the Mughal government, for Pilaji Gaikwad took up the unfinished work of the Dabhade family. Unable to suppress him in open contest, Abhai Singh got him murdered treacherously in April 1732. This crime brought no dividend, Pilaji's able son Damaji captured Baroda and marched upon Ahmadabad. Abhai Singh renewed his promise to pay *chauth*. Gujarat soon fell into the hands of the Gaikwads.²⁸ It was not possible for Abhai Singh to resist the growing power of the Marathas without adequate support from Delhi.

BATTLE OF GANGWANA

In his later years Abhai Singh, intoxicated with pride and wealth, and rendered incapable of energetic effort and sober judgement by love of ease and opium, engaged in adventures which merely weakened his state instead of increasing his power and glory.

Zorawar Singh, the Rathor ruler of Bikaner, belonged to a junior branch of the ruling dynasty of Marwar. He offended his 'nominal suzerain' Abhai Singh. The latter besieged the city of Bikaner; but Bakht Singh, who secretly entertained the ambition of supplanting his brother, not only furnished the besieged with the means of defence, but also induced Sawai Jai Singh of Amber to take up the cause of Bikaner. The Rathors resented Kachhwah interference in their domestic affairs. The letters exchanged between Sawai Jai Singh and Abhai Singh were intemperate in language. A local dispute developed into a large-scale political crisis. Sawai Jai Singh collected

²⁸ Sardesai, *New History of the Marathas*, II, 122-31. Jodhpur letters in *Proceedings of Indian Historical Records Commission*, 1939.

a large army consisting of about 100,000 men; it was joined by the Hadas of Bundi, the Jadavs of Karauli, the Sisodias of Shahpura, the Khichi Chauhans and the Jats, as also by three Muslim generals who had been sent by the emperor to assist Sawai Jai Singh against the Marathas. The ruler of Amber advanced at the head of this big but heterogeneous army as far as Gangwana, a village on the frontier of Marwar, 11 miles north-east of the Pushkar lake, and encamped there.

Meanwhile Abhai Singh had realised the seriousness of the situation, raised the siege of Bikaner and proceeded to defend his own territory. Bakht Singh now found that his selfish plot had kindled a national warfare which threatened the honour of his clan. So he temporarily set aside his personal ambition and saved the honour of the Rathors by conspicuous gallantry. On 28 May 1741 a decisive battle was fought at Gangwana. Although the Rathors were hopelessly outnumbered by the Kachhwahs and their allies, Bakht Singh, at the head of only 1,000 Rathor horsemen, secured a complete victory. Even Jaipur bards, says Tod, 'could not refrain from awarding the meed of valour to their foes'. The eye-witness Harcharandas gives a vivid picture of the horror of the battle field. According to him, the casualties were 12,000 slain and the same number wounded. Probably these figures are exaggerated. However, this battle was soon followed by conclusion of peace between the Rathors and the Kachhwahs.²⁹

This episode is interesting for several reasons. In the first place, it illustrates the character of the Rajput princes in the eighteenth century. Personal vanity rather than political wisdom determined their policy. Abhai Singh had no adequate reason to invade Bikaner, and Sawai Jai Singh had no right to send him threatening letters. It is tragic to contemplate that such a bloody but completely useless battle should have resulted from a letter written by Sawai Jai Singh in his cups. Secondly, it illustrates one aspect of Rajput patriotism, viz. the strength of the clan system. Bakht Singh was by no means a man of noble character; his guilty ambition created internal dissensions which weakened Marwar. But he set aside all selfish motives when he found his own clan threatened by a rival clan. Thirdly, the battle of Gangwana marks an important stage in the growth of that Rathor-Kachhwah rivalry which had begun towards the close of Aurangzib's reign and continued to be 'the dominating factor of Rajput society' even under British rule.³⁰

29 *Chahar Gulzar*, 377b-379b, *Vamsa Bhāskar*, 3304-12, *Annals of Marwar*, Chapter XI. See V. S. Bhatnagar, *Life and Times of Sawai Jai Singh*, pp. 261-63.

30 J. N. Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, 1 (2nd ed.), 131.

CLAN RIVALRIES

Originally the Kachhwahs were one of the minor clans of Rajputana and they did not play any leading role in her history. But their association with the Mughals brought them power and prominence. The eclipse of the Rathors after the death of Jaswant Singh provided an excellent opportunity which Sawai Jai Singh was not slow to grasp after Aurangzib's death. He outdistanced the Rathors and made the Kachhwahs the premier clan in Rajputana. Naturally the Rathors resented this disturbance in the equilibrium which had been established in the seventeenth century. The history of the Rajputs in the eighteenth century cannot be properly understood without a clear appreciation of this factor.

The accentuation of Rathor-Kachhwah rivalry was an offshoot of the disappearance of Timurid supremacy. The decay of the imperial power in the second quarter of the eighteenth century removed from Rajputana a great 'unifying bond and common controlling authority'. Sir J. N. Sarkar points out, "No superior power was left to enforce lawful rights and prevent ambitious conflicts between one vassal State and another, one prince and another of the same royal house. All the pent up personal ambitions and inter-State rivalries, which the strong hand of the Paramount Power at Delhi, from Akbar to Bahadur Shah, had repressed for a century and a half, now burst forth without fear or check."³¹ The invasion of Bikaner by Abhai Singh and the battle of Gangwana could not have taken place in the days of Akbar or Aurangzib. The wars of succession in Bundi, Jaipur and Marwar, which will be described below, would certainly have been prevented by a strong emperor. The disappearance of a common superior removed all restraints upon clannish pride, personal vanity and local patriotism.

The fall of the Mughal empire was an incentive to dissensions and strife in Rajputana in another way. As loyal vassals of the Timurids the Rajput princes had enjoyed honourable and lucrative careers all over India and also in Afghanistan and Central Asia. They had served as generals and viceroys; their clansmen had served in lower ranks. Those opportunities to win distinction and to earn money were now totally lost. After two centuries of contact with far off lands and peoples—from the snowy heights of Central Asia to the muddy plains of Bengal—the Rajputs found themselves forced back into their rugged hills and thirsty deserts. No wonder they became restless and used their military zeal in petty strife in their own land. "Confined within the narrow limits of their sterile homes, they turned

³¹ *Ibid.*

their swords against one another. Civil war raged in every family, which quickly involved the neighbouring States as the allies of one or other of the rivals."³²

CIVIL WAR IN MARWAR

Abhai Singh's death in 1749 closed an epoch in the history of Marwar. He was neither great in character nor very successful in his career; but he was able to maintain the traditional importance of Marwar. His 'ferocious courage' delighted the gallant Rathors and their bards sang: "Abhi-Mal ruled over the seventeen thousand towns of Guzerat, and the nine thousand of Marwar, besides one thousand elsewhere. The princes of Edur, of Bhooj, of Parkur, of Sinde, and of Sirohi, the Chalook Ran of Futtahpur, Jhoojoonoo, Jessulmeer, Nagore, Dongerpoor, Banswarra, Lunawarra, Hulwad, every morning bowed the head to Abhi-Mal."³³ In such bardic exaggeration was echoed the vanishing glory of the Rathors.

With the death of Abhai Singh Marwar lost its internal political stability. Here, as in some other states, wars of succession, unknown in Rajputana in the age of Mughal supremacy, became a chronic evil, creating internal anarchy and inviting external aggression, when the restraining influence of imperial authority was finally removed. From 1749 onwards Marwar suffered from a protracted civil war on the issue of succession.

Abhai Singh's son and successor, Ram Singh, was an arrogant and impetuous youngman of nineteen. He inherited the arrogance of his father, with all the impetuosity of the Chohans' (his mother's clan). He insulted Khush-hal Singh, the old chief of the Champa-wats, Marwar's premier noble, and 'despising the sober wisdom of the councillors of the state', gave his confidence to a *nakarchi* (the person who summoned the nobles by beat of the state *nagarra* or 'great kettledrum'). His 'politic' and ambitious uncle Bakht Singh, the murderer of Ajit Singh took advantage of his follies. This was possible because the parricide had some attractive qualities. Tod says, 'There was a joyousness of soul about Bukhta which, united to an intrepidity and a liberality alike unbounded, made him the very model of a Rajpoot. To these qualifications were superadded a majestic mien and Herculean frame, with a mind versed in all the literature of his country, besides poetic talent of no mean order; and but for that one damning crime, he would have been handed down to posterity as one of the noblest princes Rajwarra ever knew.'³⁴

³² Ibid.

³³ *Annals of Marwar*, Chapter X.

³⁴ Ibid., Chapter XII.

About a year before Abhai Singh's death Bakht Singh had been appointed viceroy of Gujarat for the purpose of saving that province from Maratha aggression. On Ram Singh's accession he absented himself from the ceremony of installation and sent a nurse to put 'the first mark of inauguration on the forehead of his prince'. This was an insult which Ram Singh refused to tolerate; the inevitable civil war broke out.

Bakht Singh was strengthened by the support of Salabat Khan, the Mir Bakhshi of the empire and viceroy of Agra and Ajmer. He came at the head of 18,000 troops to help Bakht Singh against his nephew and joined him at Narnaul. Ram Singh strengthened himself by an alliance with Ishwari Singh, son and successor of Sawai Jai Singh of Jaipur, who gladly welcomed this opportunity of being publicly regarded as the superior of every other potentate in Rajasthan and the patron of the head of the rival house of Jodhpur.

In April 1750 the united forces of Ram Singh and Ishwari Singh, 30,000 strong, were confronted by Bakht Singh and Salabat Khan near Merta. After half-hearted intrigues and negotiations, followed by an indecisive battle, peace was concluded. Ram Singh paid three lakhs of rupees in cash and promised to pay four lakhs more. Ishwari Singh promised a tribute of 27 lakhs on two conditions: the imperial army was to be withdrawn from Rajputana and the office of naib nazim of Agra was to be conferred upon him. No concession was made to Bakht Singh; he returned to Nagour disappointed. Salabat Khan failed to collect the promised contributions from the Rajput states; he 'gained neither victory nor money'.³⁵ His unsuccessful campaign was the last attempt of the dying empire to assert its authority in Rajputana. The annexation of Ajmer by Jodhpur in 1752 and of Ranthambhor by Jaipur in 1753 marked the final extinction of Mughal authority in the subah of Ajmer, which henceforward became an exclusive hunting ground for the Marathas.

Soon after the departure of the Mir Bakhshi Bakht Singh, assisted by Khush-hal Singh Champawat, met his nephew near Luniawas (near Merta) and defeated him in a sanguinary batter (27 November 1750).³⁶ In June 1751 Bakht Singh occupied Jodhpur and crowned himself there. Ram Singh fled to Jaipur and sought Maratha aid. Bakht Singh prudently secured the support of the chief nobles and officers of the state, occupied Ajmer—the old seat of Mughal authority in Rajputana—and collected troops for defending Marwar against the Marathas. Towards the middle of 1752 he repulsed a

³⁵ SPD, II, 16; XVI, 27, 34, 35. Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, I (2nd ed.), 175-78.

³⁶ *Vamsa Bhāskar*, 3628-30. SPD, II, 15.

Maratha force led by Jayappa Sindhi. He died of cholera in September 1752. Tod records the tradition that he was poisoned by his niece, the Rathor queen of Madho Singh of Jaipur, who had given shelter to Ram Singh. Bakht Singh was succeeded by his son Bijay Singh, but the war of succession continued. Bardic tradition thus contrasts the characters of these two rival cousins : "Fortune never attended the stirrup of Beejy Singh, who never gained a battle, though at the head of a hundred thousand men; but Ram Singh, by his valour and conduct, gained victories with a handful."³⁷

AMBER: SAWAI JAI SINGH

The most prominent Rajput prince of the first half of the eighteenth century was Sawai Jai Singh of Amber. He began his long reign in 1699 and died in September 1743 in his fifty-seventh year. His early career was full of promise, but in his later years hard drinking and sexual excess shattered his health and clouded his judgement. Tod says, "As a statesman, legislator, and man of science, the character of Sowar Jey Singh is worthy of an ample delineation, which would correct our opinion of the genius and capacity of the princes of Rajpootana, of whom we are apt to form too low an estimate."³⁸

He founded a new capital city (Jaipur) which was built on a novel technique of town planning unknown in India in those days. Tod says, "Jaipur is the only city in India built upon a regular plan, with streets bisecting each other at right angles. The merit of the design and execution is assigned to Vidyadhar, a native of Bengal, one of the most eminent coadjutors of the prince in all his scientific pursuits, both astronomical and historical". He gave the Kachhwahs a palace worthy of their political status: a residence 'as celebrated as those of Boondi or Oodipur, or, to borrow a more appropriate comparison, the Kremlin at Moscow'.³⁹

Sawai Jai Singh's intellectual curiosity shows that the spirit of scientific inquiry was not dead in India even in that age of disintegration. While building the new city of Jaipur he utilised the plans of many European cities which he had collected. He was deeply interested in mathematics and astronomy. Not satisfied with Indian mathematics alone, he studied Greek and modern European treatises on the subject. At his instance some Greek and European works on mathematics and some Arabic works on astronomy were translated into Sanskrit. He built well-equipped observatories at Jaipur, Delhi,

³⁷ *Annals of Marwar*, Chapters XII-XIII, *Vamsa Bhāskar*, 3621.

³⁸ *Annals of Amber*, Chapter II.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

Ujjain, Banaras and Mathura. For the purpose of constructing these observatories he invited to Jaipur the Jesuit Father Boudier from Bengal in 1733 as also Father Andre Strobl and Antoine Gabelsperger from Germany in 1736. He established contact with the king of Portugal and procured astronomical tables from that country, which, however, he found inferior to his own tables.⁴⁰

SAWAI JAI SINGH AND IMPERIAL POLITICS

Sawai Jai Singh took up the cause of Azam in the war of succession following Aurangzib's death. He made his final submission to Bahadur Shah in June 1710. After Bahadur Shah's death he took no part in the war of succession although he had attractive grants from Jahandar Shah. On Farrukh-siyar's accession he was appointed viceroy of Malwa in 1713. Three years later he was sent against Churaman Jat. In November 1716 he besieged the newly built Jat fort at Thun. Although the Jats were defeated in isolated battles, the fort could not be captured even after a dreary siege which dragged on for eighteen months. Churaman made peace with the emperor in 1718. Sawai Jai Singh's failure was primarily due to his lack of military skill; according to Tod, an enthusiastic admirer of his intellectual qualities, 'his reputation as a soldier would never have handed down his name with honour to posterity; on the contrary, his courage had none of the fire which is requisite to make a Rajput hero'.⁴¹ It appears from Persian historical chronicles that Churaman was secretly supported, and even aided with supplies of food and powder, by Sayyid Hasan Ali Khan, who was not well-disposed towards the ruler of Amber.

After the fall of Farrukh-siyar, Sawai Jai Singh displayed open hostility towards the new emperor Muhammad Shah, and even invaded Mughal territory in August 1719. Peace was, however, concluded within a few months at the mediation of Ajit Singh of Marwar. The raja of Amber received a large sum of money and also the government of *sarkar* Sorath in subah Ahmadabad.⁴² In 1722 he was appointed viceroy of Agra and again commanded to suppress the rebellious Jats. Meanwhile Churaman had died and his sons had taken refuge in the fort of Thun. In November 1722 Sawai Jai Singh captured Thun. This success was partly due to the treachery of Badan Singh, Churaman's nephew, who joined the Mughals to wreak vengeance upon his cousins. He was rewarded with the chieftship of the Jats. Muhkam Singh, Churaman's son, found shelter in the court of Ajit Singh.

40 Ibid. SPD, XIII, 51. *Vamsa Bhāskar*, 3212.

41 *Annals of Amber*, Chapter II.

42 See *Proceedings of Rajasthan History Congress*, 1967, 90-92.

SAWAI JAI SINGH AND MARATHAS

After the suppression of the Jats Sawai Jai Singh found himself entrusted by the imperial court with the virtually impossible task of resisting the Marathas in Malwa. There were cordial ties between the Kachhwah ruling house and the Maratha royal family since the days of Shivaji and Mirza Raja Jai Singh, to which Sawai Jai Singh referred in a letter written to Shahu probably in 1708. But it was not to the interest of the Rajputs to allow the Marathas to extend their power to the north of the Narmada.⁴³ Their incursions across that strategic river—the boundary between north and south India—had begun as early as 1699. The successive viceroys sent by the imperial court could not achieve any lasting success for the imperial cause. Sawai Jai Singh defeated the Marathas at Pilsud (19 miles east of Maheswar) in 1715.⁴⁴ In 1728 Chimmaji Appa defeated and killed the subahdar of Malwa, Girdhar Bahadur, as also his cousin and commander Daya Bahadur. In 1729 Sawai Jai Singh was ordered by the emperor to go to Malwa to drive the Marathas out with his own forces. Impressed by the growing strength of the Marathas the shrewd ruler of Amber (who had already met the peshwa Balaji Vishwanath in Delhi in 1719) adopted a policy of conciliation. The imperial court decided to open negotiations with the court of Satara. According to Marathi evidence, Sawai Jai Singh took the lead in this matter and chose the personnel of the negotiating team in consultation with the rana of Mewar, Sangram Singh. The leader of the team, Dip Singh, and his associate, Mansaram Purohit were selected by the Jaipur Raja, while the rana's nominee was Bagchi (Vyaghraji). The negotiators arrived at Satara in August 1730 and, after completing their talks there, went to Aurangabad to meet the Nizam-ul-mulk. On receipt of their report Sawai Jai Singh proposed that an annual payment of ten lakhs be made to the Marathas in return for their promise to stop their raids in that province. This arrangement was not acceptable to the imperial court.⁴⁵

Sawai Jai Singh was replaced by Muhammad Khan Bangash as subahdar of Malwa in September 1730. As the Bangash failed to expel the Marathas from Malwa, Sawai Jai Singh was again put in charge of that province towards the end of 1732. He held this post for the next four years. The task imposed upon him was by no means easy. The imperial administration in Malwa had completely broken down. The vigorous leadership of Baji Rao I was steadily strengthening the ambition and self-confidence of the Marathas. But at the

⁴³ Ibid. 1969, 63-65.

⁴⁴ Ibid. 1970, 50-54.

⁴⁵ SPD, X, 66; XIII, 10. Sardesai, *New History of the Marathas*, II, 112, 141-42.

moment the imperial court was fully alive to the danger. Sawai Jai Singh was given 20 lakhs of rupees for raising an army for the protection of Malwa. We are, therefore, hardly justified in saying that he was allowed to pursue the policy of appeasement which he had initiated⁴⁶ in 1729. He was expected to pursue a policy of vigorous resistance, but he did not do so. Sir J. N. Sarkar observes that 'he only made a show of fighting and preferred the policy of buying them (*i.e.* the Marathas) off for the time with a part of the money given him, pocketing the balance, and thereafter passing his days in his own kingdom regardless of the fate of the province entrusted to his care'.⁴⁷ This is a grave charge, but with the data at our disposal it is hardly possible to refute it. However, we have evidence from Marathi sources which explains the Rajput ruler's policy.

Sardesai speaks of a 'particular attachment that existed' between Shahu and Sawai Jai Singh. The latter 'revered and promoted' several Maharashtrians; his family priest and his *guru* were Deccani Brahmins. Probably he formed a high opinion of the *Dakshinis* during his residence in Aurangzib's camp in his impressionable youth. Religion provided a common bond between the Maratha king and the ruler of Amber; resistance to the policy of religious intolerance introduced by Aurangzib served as a common political objective.⁴⁸ In an order of Shahu, dated 18 March 1730, Chinnaji Appa, Udaji Pawar and Malhar Rao Holkar were asked to treat Sawai Jai Singh 'with respect in view of the hereditary friendship between the two royal families'.⁴⁹ Tod refers to the 'influence his character obtained with the Mahrattas', but he is not correct in saying that it 'was even useful to his sovereign, for by it he retarded their excesses, which at length reached the capital'.⁵⁰

Sawai Jai Singh reached Ujjam as subahdar of Malwa in December 1732. A few months later, while encamped at Mandasor, he was suddenly surrounded by Ranoji Sindhia and Malhar Rao Holkar. After desultory operations he concluded peace in February 1733 by promising to pay six lakhs of rupees in cash and to cede 28 *parganahs* in lieu of *chauth*.⁵¹ After this settlement he returned to his own capital, leaving Malwa in the hands of officers who were quite incapable of resisting the Marathas. Tod gives a plausible explanation

46 V. G. Dighe, *Peshwa Bajirao I*, 113.

47 *Fall of the Mughul Empire*, I (2nd ed.), 137. See V. S. Bhatnagar, *Life and Times of Sawai Jai Singh*, Chapter IX.

48 Sardesai, *New History of the Marathas*, II, 34-35.

49 Vad, *Selections from the Satara Rajas' and Peshwas' Diaries*, I, p. 95.

50 *Annals of Amber*, Chapter II.

51 SPD, XIV, 1, 2, XV, 6. For correction of dates see Dighe, *Peshwa Bajirao I*, 115.

of the Amber raja's policy when he attributes it to his awareness of 'the approaching downfall of the Mogul Empire': he felt it would be useless to attempt to check the Maratha inroads or to prevent the disintegration of the empire. It is true that he could not have saved the tottering empire; but it is also true that he failed to discharge his duties as a loyal vassal and responsible provincial governor. The loss of Gujarat and Malwa was probably inevitable, but it can hardly be denied that the weak and half-hearted policy of the Rajput vice-roys—Abhai Singh and Sawai Jai Singh—was to some extent responsible for it. The latter's responsibility was certainly greater than the former's.

Irvine explains the situation clearly. As governor of Agra for twelve years and of Malwa for four or five, he was in 'supreme authority' from the gates of Delhi to the banks of the Narmada. He had a large army of 30,000 horsemen and a still larger number of matchlockmen. Several times he received large sums of money from Muhammad Shah. Instead of using these resources for resisting the Marathas Sawai Jai Singh bribed them and retained half of the imperial grants for his own treasury. "After two or three years of his procedure, the Mahrattas began to expect their 'breakfast', as Warid styles it, and every time grew greedier and more avaricious." As he was supported by the court influence of Samsam-ud-daulah the emperor was afraid to take away the government of Agra or Malwa from him.⁵²

EXPANSION OF AMBER TERRITORY

Although Sawai Jai Singh made little contribution to the preservation of the disintegrating Mughal empire, his influence at the imperial court—particularly his position as subahdar of Agra—'gave him ample opportunity to enlarge and consolidate his territory'. In this enterprise his talents for civil government and court intrigue, in which he was the Machiavelli of his day, served him well. The matrimonial estates of the Kachhwahs had been very little enlarged despite their intimate connection with the Timurids. At the time of Sawai Jai Singh's accession the *raj* of Amber consisted only of three *parganahs*: Amber, Deosa and Baswa. The western parts had been sequestrated and added to the imperial domains attached to Ajmer.

The Shekhavati confederation was 'superior to, and independent of, the parent State'. This peculiar principality had sprung from the 'redundant feudality' of Amber. Its chieftains were descended from Udikaran, a ruler of Amber in the late fourteenth century, through his grandson Sheikhji whose birth was attributed to a Muslim saint

named Sheikh Burhan.⁵³ Sheikhji obtained as an appanage the district of Amrutsir; but he extended his territory at the cost of his neighbours and 'consolidated three hundred and sixty villages under his sway'. The nominal suzerainty of the ruler of Amber was recognized; the tribute paid consisted of 'all the colts reared on the original estates'. This slender link was sundered in Sheikhji's time. His 'reputation and power attracted the jealous notice' of the ruler of Amber who made 'reiterated assaults': these were, however, 'successfully withstood' by Sheikhji with the aid of Panni Afghans belonging to the Durrani tribe. The result was 'a total separation of the Shekhawat colonies from the parent state' until—more than two centuries later—Sawai Jai Singh, 'with his means as lieutenant of the empire, compelled homage, submission, and pecuniary relief from them'.⁵⁴ He also dispossessed the Birgujars—a branch of the Kachhwahis of Deoti and Rajore which were added to his dominions and came to be known as Macheri.

AMBER AND BUNDI

One result of the disruption of imperial authority was that the minor princes of Rajputana found themselves at the mercy of their powerful neighbours. Bundi was a victim of Sawai Jai Singh's policy of aggression. In the war of succession after Aurangzib's death Budh Singh of Bundi took up the cause of Bahadur Shah; but Ram Singh of Kotah, who claimed the headship of the entire Hada clan, sacrificed his life for Azam in the battle of Jajau. Ram Singh's claim was inherited by his son and successor, Bhim Singh, who was supported by the Sayyids. Budh Singh took the side of Sawai Jai Singh and Farrukhsiyar. The rivalry between Bundi and Kotah, however, lost its immediate importance when the powerful ruler of Amber tried to assert his supremacy over the Hadas. Utilising a family quarrel as an excuse, Sawai Jai Singh decided to expel Budh Singh from Bundi and to give the throne of that state to Dalel Singh, the second son of Salim Singh Hada of Karwar. Tod saw in this plan 'a deeply cherished political scheme of the prince of Amber, for the maintenance of his supremacy over the minor Rajas, to which his office of viceroy of Malwa, Ajmere, and Agra, gave full scope, and he skilfully availed himself of the results of the civil wars of the Moguls'.⁵⁵ The struggle between the Kachhwahis and the Hadas, which thus began in 1729, continued for about two decades and ended in the victory of the latter.

⁵³ Tod found his shrine 'still existing' at a distance of about six miles from Achroia.

⁵⁴ *Annals of Amber*, Chapter V.

⁵⁵ *Annals of Maravati*, Chapter III.

The fort of Bundi was occupied by Jaipur troops during Budh Singh's absence, and Dalel Singh became the ruler of the state in September 1729, acknowledging Sawai Jai Singh as his overlord. The ruler of Amber secured imperial confirmation of this arrangement. Dalel Singh was afterwards married to a daughter of Sawai Jai Singh. After an unsuccessful attempt to recover Bundi in 1730 Budh Singh took refuge at Udaipur and then at Begham. He was joined by Pratap Singh, the elder brother of Dalel Singh, who was jealous of his younger brother's unexpected prosperity. At the instance of Budh Singh's queen Pratap Singh secured Maratha aid against Dalel Singh. In April 1734 Malhar Rao Holkar and Ranoji Sindhia invaded Bundi. The fort of Bundi was occupied and Salim Singh, who was acting as regent for his son, was carried away as prisoner. But the success of the Marathas was temporary; their departure was followed by the arrival of a Jaipur force, which restored Dalel Singh to the throne of Bundi.⁵⁸ In despair Budh Singh gave himself up to wine and opium. After his death (April 1739) his son Unmed Singh continued the struggle. He was able to occupy the throne of Bundi in 1748 after Sawai Jai Singh's death.⁵⁷

ASVAMEDHA

An instance of Sawai Jai Singh's vanity is found in the battle of Gangwana, to which we have referred above. Another instance is offered by his the *asvamedha* sacrifice, which was regarded in ancient India as a declaration of assumption of universal supremacy. Probably he performed this great sacrifice twice: once in 1734 after the Hurda conference, and again in 1741. Tod says, "He erected a sacrificial hall of much beauty and splendour, whose columns and ceilings were covered with plates of silver; nor is it improbable that the steed, emblematic of *Surya*, may have been led round the hall, and afterwards sacrificed to the solar divinity."⁵⁸ It was a curious performance on the part of a vassal of the Mughal empire.

SOCIAL REFORM

Although Sawai Jai Singh left several wives and concubines to ascend his funeral pyre, he was in some respects a social reformer. Female infanticide was one of the worst features of Rajput society. The laws and customs which regulated marriage among the Rajputs powerfully promoted this horrible custom. As intermarriage was prohibited between families of the same clan (*gotra*), bridegrooms

⁵⁶ *Vamsa Bhāskar*, 3147, 3216-20. SPD, XIV, 10, 11, 13.

⁵⁷ *Annals of Haravati*, Chapter III.

⁵⁸ *Annals of Amber*, Chapter II.

were comparatively rare. Naturally the demand for dowries went on increasing, till many Rajputs found it impossible to provide as much as was required for marrying their daughters to their equals in family pride. They escaped social degradation by killing their infant daughters.

In order to remove this inhuman custom Sawai Jai Singh submitted to the ruler of every Rajput state a decree in which marriage expenditure was sought to be regulated in terms of the financial resources to the girl's father; not more than one year's income was to be spent for a daughter's marriage. This plan was laid before the vassals of different states. In Mewar it was frustrated by the vanity of the rawat of Salumbar, 'who expended on the marriage of his daughter a sum even greater than his sovereign could have afforded'. Those who could create public opinion against lavish expenditure on marriages—the whole class of *mangtas* (mendicants), bards, minstrels, jugglers, Brahmins—found their interest in stimulating it, for they profited from liberality on these occasions. Sawai Jai Singh's premature plan of social reform foundered on the rock of their opposition⁵⁹.

MARATHAS IN RAJPUTANA. EARLY EXPEDITIONS

The virtual extinction of Mughal authority in Gujarat and Malwa in the early years of Muhammad Shah's reign exposed Rajputana to Maratha incursions. The first Maratha invasion of Rajputana took place in 1734, when Malhar Rao Holkar and Ranoji Sindhia interfered in the war of succession in Bundi, in which Sawai Jai Singh himself was directly involved. After their departure Sawai Jai Singh summoned a conference of all the princes of Rajasthan at Hurda near Ajmer for the purpose of organizing common measures of defence against the Marathas. The princes met in July 1734 with rana of Mewar, Jagat Singh II, the eldest son and successor of Sangram Singh II, as president. It was decided that practical measures would be taken after the rains, the chiefs of each party assembling at Rampura. Great emphasis was laid on unity: "All are united, in good and in evil, and none will withdraw therefrom, on which oaths have been made, and faith pledged..." But unity was unknown to the Rajputs. Mewar's leadership could not be effective in view of the prominence and ambition of Amber and Marwar. Indeed, there were in Rajasthan 'too many discordant particles—too many rivalries and national antipathies, ever cordially to amalgamate'. Toil regrets: "Had it been otherwise, the opportunities were many

⁵⁹ *Annals of Mewar, 'Festivals and Customs of Mewar'*, Chapter XXIV.

and splendid for the recovery of Rajput-freedom; but though individually enamoured of liberty, . . . they never would submit to the control required to work it out. . ."⁶⁰

While the Rajput princes indulged in a vague dream of unity against the common enemy, the imperial court decided to send out against the Marathas two large armies, one under the command of the wazir, Qamr-ud-din Khan and the other under that of the mir bakhshi Samsam-ud-daulah, with the object of expelling the Marathas from Malwa and Rajputana. In November 1734 the wazir left Delhi at the head of 25,000 men and advanced via Agra towards Bundelkhand, where he came into contact with Pilaji Jadhav. After several indecisive contests Pilaji left for the Deccan.

The mir bakhshi who had left Delhi at the same time as the wazir, was joined on his way to Ajmer by Sawai Jai Singh, Abhai Singh and Rao Durjan Sal of Kotah with their contingents. He was very strong in artillery and his army probably swelled to about two lakhs of men. Determined to expel the Marathas from Malwa he entered that province through the Mukundara pass and reached the Rampur district in February 1735. Here he was challenged by Sindhia and Holkar whose light cavalry at first blockaded the large and slow-moving imperial army. All on a sudden the Marathas raised the blockade entered the territories of Sawai Jai Singh through the Mukundara pass and Bundi Kotah and threatened the defenceless Jaipur and Jodhpur territories. The rich city of Sambhar which was then under direct imperial administration is plundered by Holkar. Samsam-ud-daulah retraced his steps to Rajputana and spent idle weeks at Kotah and Bundi. The Rajput princes were naturally anxious to save their own territories. Sawai Jai Singh now revived his old policy of appeasement. He persuaded the mir bakhshi to promise to pay to the Marathas 22 lakhs of rupees as *chauth* for Malwa. The wazir offered five lakhs to Pilaji Jadhav for leaving Malwa. The Marathas accepted these terms. Peace was restored towards the close of March 1735 and the two imperial generals returned to Delhi. It was clearly demonstrated that even the combined forces of the imperial court and leading Rajput princes could not defend Malwa and Rajputana against the lightning raids of the Maratha cavalry.⁶¹

Sawai Jai Singh and his ally, the mir bakhshi, were naturally blamed for the failure of the grand expedition of 1734-35. The former had special responsibility for the defence of imperial interest

⁶⁰ *Annals of Mevar*, Chapter XV. Vamsa Bhadkar, 3227. Tod says that the conference was held at Huria. He gives translation of the treaty.

⁶¹ *SPD*, XIV, 21, 22, 23, 27; XXII, 294.

because he was the subahdar of Agra and Malwa. The emperor himself was dissatisfied; he openly censured them for having bought the Marathas off. There were hints of a secret understanding between the Rajput raja and his co-religionists. This was not quite unlikely. In August 1735 Sindhia and Holkar invaded Marwar under the peshwa's orders, but they had instructions to spare the Jaipur and Mewar territories.⁶² However, at the imperial court Saadat Khan, the governor of Avadh, declared that he could crush the Marathas if the governorships of Agra and Malwa were conferred upon him; he wanted no money, although Sawai Jai Singh had asked for a crore of rupees. Alarmed at the prospect of losing the viceroyalties of these provinces, the latter tried to strengthen his position by entering into a secret alliance with the Marathas. In August 1735 he proposed to the peshwa that he should come to Jaipur and then proceed to Delhi to interview the emperor. For the Marathas it was a financially lucrative proposal; the expenses of the peshwa's troops were to be paid by the Jaipur raja, who also promised payment of the *chauth* of Malwa, although the emperor had not ratified the agreement made by the mir bakhshi in March 1735. While Sawai Jai Singh was secretly negotiating with the Marathas, the emperor was making arrangements for sending another grand expedition against them. A reconciliation was effected between Abhai Singh and the wazir who was proposed to be put in charge of the provinces of Agra, Malwa and Gujarat. Sawai Jai Singh was to be punished if he refused or hesitated to join the imperial army with his own contingent.⁶³

The crisis was precipitated by the peshwa's march to the north. Leaving Poona in October 1735, he proceeded via Loniwada (in Gujarat), realised tribute from Dungarpur, and entered Mewar in January 1736. The memory of Holkar's lightning raids created consternation in Rajputana, for greater suffering was naturally apprehended from the visit of the *de facto* head of the Maratha empire. The rana wrote to his premier, Behardas Pancholi: "Mulhar came last year, but this was nothing—Bajerow this, and he is powerful. But if god hears me he will not get my land."⁶⁴ Baji Rao, however, was too shrewd and wise a diplomat to earn notoriety by reckless devastation. His object was twofold; he wanted to impose *chauth* on the Rajput states by peaceful persuasion,⁶⁵ if possible, and to utilise Sawai Jai Singh and the mir bakhshi for the purpose of es-

⁶² SPD, XIII, 49.

⁶³ SPD, XIV, 31, 39, 47.

⁶⁴ *Annals of Mewar*, Chapter XV.

⁶⁵ SPD, XXIX, 39.

tablishing Maratha influence at the imperial court. The *chauth* collected by the Marathas from Malwa and Bundelkhand was to be legalised. So the peshwa proceeded cautiously.

For some time past the peshwa's agents had been trying to persuade the rana of Mewar to surrender the *parganah* of Banera, but Jagat Singh II was not prepared to make that sacrifice. In February 1736 Baji Rao arrived at Udaipur, where he was received with great ceremony. Formal courtesy did not prevent him from compelling the helpless rana to sign a treaty promising to pay an annual tribute of Rs. 1,50,000. To cover this large amount the *parganah* of Banera was ceded to the Marathas. The tribute was divided into three equal shares, assigned to Holkar, Sindhia and Pawar. The management was entrusted at first to Holkar, then to Sindhia. Tod says that this treaty remained in force for ten years, after which it became a nullity. In addition to this lucrative treaty Baji Rao realised from Mewar a fine of seven lakhs of rupees for an alleged trap to murder him.⁶⁶

At Udaipur the Peshwa was visited by the diwan of Sawai Jai Singh, who invited him to come to Jaipur. On his way from Udaipur to Jaipur Baji Rao was met by the Jaipur raja at a village called Bhambhole (near Kishangarh) in March 1736. The proud Rajput prince, a man of culture and refined tastes, was not pleased with the rough and almost insulting treatment which he received from his powerful guest; but his critical position at the imperial court did not allow him to break with the Marathas. The only concession which Sawai Jai Singh received from Baji Rao was the latter's refusal to restore Bundi to Budh Singh, although Malhar Rao Holkar did not favour the virtual annexation of Bundi to Jaipur. From Bhambhole Sawai Jai Singh returned to his capital, telling Baji Rao that time was not yet ripe for his advance towards Delhi, and assuring him that attempts would be made to secure the emperor's approval for the cession of Malwa to the Marathas. The peshwa's negotiations with the imperial court—with Sawai Jai Singh as the intermediary—offered no prospect of real settlement. So Baji Rao returned to Poona in June 1736.⁶⁷

Marwar suffered from the depredations of the Marathas during Baji Rao's visit to Rajputana. Abhai Singh was then known to be an ally of the Turani party which was opposed to the policy of ap-

⁶⁶ SPD. XIV, 50, 51; XXX, 128, 131, 134; 143; 160. *Vamsa Bhāskar*, 3238-38. *Annals of Mewar*, Chapter XV. See *Proceedings of Rajasthan History Congress*, 1969, 58-62.

⁶⁷ SPD. XIV, 51, 52, 54, 56, 58; XXII, 331, 333. *Vamsa Bhāskar*, 3238-40.

peasement favoured by Sawai Jai Singh. Sindhia and Holkar were, therefore, sent to ravage Jodhpur territory. Merta, Nagour and Ajmer were attacked and laid under contribution. Sindhia and Holkar rejoined the peshwa in April 1736.⁶⁸

Even after Baji Rao's return to the Deccan Sawai Jai Singh, undeterred by his unpleasant experience at Bhambhole, continued the policy of appeasement. In September 1736 he persuaded the emperor to appoint Baji Rao as deputy governor of Malwa, with Sawai Jai Singh himself as the nominal governor. "This was", says Irvine, "in effect, though not in form, a cession of the province."⁶⁹ But the peshwa was not satisfied. Encouraged by Sawai Jai Singh's secret invitation, Baji Rao started from Poona in November 1736, made a cavalry dash upon the environs of Delhi in March 1737, and returned to Poona in July 1738. The only Rajput state affected by this grand expedition of the peshwa was Kotah. Durjan Sal, the ruler of that state, tried to help Nizam-ul-mulk when the latter was invested by the Marathas at Bhopal in December 1737. He was then intercepted by Malhar Rao Holkar and Jaswant Pawar. After Nizam-ul-mulk's defeat and retreat to Delhi the peshwa, accompanied by Holkar and Pawar, marched from Bhopal to Kotah besieged the fort of Kotah and plundered the district (January 1738). Durjan Sal fled to Gangroni and made peace by paying a fine of ten lakhs of rupees.⁷⁰

Baji Rao died in April 1740. His eldest son and successor, Balaji Baji Rao, was a more tactful diplomat than his father, and his policy of aggression was aided by the collapse of the Mughal empire after Nadir Shah's invasion. Balaji Baji Rao came to north India in 1741 advancing as far as Gwalior, and found in Sawai Jai Singh a dependable and resourceful ally. On the latter's advice the emperor conferred upon the peshwa the deputy governorship of Malwa in July 1741. Malwa became virtually a part of the Maratha empire.⁷¹

JAIPUR: ISHWARI SINGH AND MARATHAS

Sawai Jai Singh was succeeded in September 1743 by his eldest son Ishwari Singh. The collapse of imperial authority as a result of Nadir Shah's invasion and the virtual cession of Malwa to Balaji Baji Rao almost invited systematic Maratha intervention in Rajputana, and internecine disputes in several Rajput states offered good excuses for that intervention. Sawai Jai Singh's policy of ap-

⁶⁸ SPD, XIII, 39, 49; XIV, 14.

⁶⁹ *Later Mughals*, II, 285.

⁷⁰ SPD, XV, 68; XXII, 120, 341. *Vaman Bhāskar*, 3249.

⁷¹ SPD, XV, 68.

peasement had served the Marathas well in their struggle against the decadent Timurid empire. It is an irony of fate that his eldest son was driven to death by their rapacity.

In 1708 rana Amar Singh II had offered his daughter in marriage to Sawai Jai Singh. It was stipulated that the succession would devolve on the male issues of this marriage, and that the female issues should never be 'dishonoured by being married to a Mogul'. This stipulation involved 'a sacrifice of the rights of primogeniture'. Although Tod says that these rights were 'clung to by the Rajpoots with extreme pertinacity', yet he himself 'speaks in another connection of many instances in the annals of Rajpootana of the rights of primogeniture being set aside'.⁷² Deviations from the normal custom could not provoke civil war so long as Mughal supremacy was meaningful and the Mughal army stood in the background. The decay of imperial authority changed the situation. After Sawai Jai Singh's death Ishwari Singh violated his father's compact with Mewar, ascended the throne, and refused to recognize the claim of his younger step-brother, Madho Singh, Sawai Jai Singh's son by the princess of Mewar. It is difficult to say whether Sawai Jai Singh himself had really intended to adhere to the compact of 1708 and to overlook the claim of his eldest son; for although Madho Singh was sometimes officially described as heir-apparent he was given in his father's life time an unusually large appanage consisting of four *parganas* (Tonk, Rampura, Fagi and Malpura). Moreover, he received from rana Sangram Singh II the important fief of Rampura (in Mewar), on condition of supplying 1,000 hors: and 2,000 foot. Thus his services were transferred to Mewar with Sawai Jai Singh's consent. On the whole, it is reasonable to accept Tod's conclusion that Madho Singh was 'not brought up to the expectation' of securing his father's throne.⁷³

Shortly after Sawai Jai Singh's death rana Jagat Singh II decided to put Madho Singh on the throne of Jaipur. He advanced as far as the village of Jamoli near Jahajpur, but peace was concluded without bloodshed, Ishwari Singh promising to grant his brother an appanage worth several lakhs of rupees. Madho Singh, however, was not satisfied. He wanted one-half his father's dominions and refused to accept Ishwari Singh's offer. In February 1745 the Maratha allies of Ishwari Singh made a successful surprise attack upon the Mewar camp. Jagat Singh II and Madho Singh fled to Udaipur and

⁷² See *Annals of Marwar*, Chapter V. Gaj Singh excluded his eldest son, Amar Singh, from succession for 'dangerous turbulence and overbearing impetuosity' and nominated his second son, Jaswant Singh, as his successor.

⁷³ *Annals of Mewar*, Chapter XV. *Annals of Amber*, Chapter III.

Ishwari Singh, conscious of his own strength, withdrew his conciliatory offer.⁷⁴

This contest for succession had disastrous consequences for Rajputana. In 1746 Ummed Singh, son of Budh Singh of Bundi whom Sawai Jai Singh had deprived of his inheritance, joined Madho Singh and Jagat Singh II against their common enemy, Ishwari Singh. The three allies applied for help to Malhar Rao Holkar, offering him two lakhs of rupees. Holkar sent his son Khande Rao at the head of 1,000 horse to help Ummed Singh and Madho Singh. On his arrival in Rajputana Khande Rao was joined by the contingents of Mewar and Kotah (for Durjan Sal of Kotah was a patron of Ummed Singh). In March 1747 this allied army was completely defeated by Ishwari Singh in the battle of Rajmahal (10 miles north of Deoli). Khande Rao retreated to Bundelkhand. Bhilwara, the most prosperous commercial city in Mewar, was plundered by the Jaipur army. Jagat Singh II begged for peace; he was unable to bear the expenses of war. A fierce famine was raging throughout Rajputana and western India. The elated victor returned to Jaipur in April 1747.⁷⁵

A few months later the emperor asked for Ishwari Singh's assistance in repelling the invasion of Ahmad Shah Abdali. The price which the Jaipur raja demanded, but did not receive, was the imperial fort of Ranthambhor. Still he joined the imperial army and confronted the Abdali at the battle of Manupur in March 1748. But he made a cowardly retreat as soon as the fight began. The reputation gained at Rajmahal evaporated as a result of this costly blunder.⁷⁶

Ishwari Singh's discomfiture at Manupur naturally encouraged Madho Singh and his allies. Jagat Singh II had already sent an envoy to Poona to secure Maratha support for the fulfilment of Ishwari Singh's repudiated promise, viz. the assignment of an appanage worth 24 lakhs for Madho Singh; for this service Shahu was promised a tribute of ten lakhs or more. In March 1747 the peshwa, who had initially supported Ishwari Singh, instructed Ramchandra Baba, Sindha's diwan to secure from him an appanage worth 24 lakhs for Madho Singh, from whom a subsidy of 15 lakhs was to be demanded for this service. This policy was opposed by Ramchandra Baba, who had supported Ishwari Singh in February 1745, and wanted to continue the same policy. Malhar Rao Holkar, on the other hand, was won over by the rana. Thus the Marathas were divided in their attitude towards the dispute between Ishwari Singh and Madho Singh. As

74 SPD, XXVII, 18, 19. *Vamsa Bhāskar*, 3228, 3380.

75 SPD, II, 3, 4; XXI, 24. *Vamsa Bhāskar* 3480-68, 3472.

76 SPD, XXVII, 30.

there was no unity of action on the Maratha side, Ishwari Singh bluntly refused to accept the peshwa's terms.⁷⁷

In May 1747, after Ishwari Singh's retreat from Manupur, Balaji Baji Rao entered Jaipur territory. He was at that time in high favour at the imperial court, and his allies in Rajputana included Madho Singh and several other princes. Ishwari Singh, on the other hand, was friendless. The Marathas demanded a contribution of 50 lakhs of rupees. They even proposed to divide the Jaipur state into two equal halves, which were to be held by the two brothers. Unable to accept these terms, Ishwari Singh continued the struggle. Madho Singh encouraged the Marathas by promising to pay Shahu ten lakhs of rupees if the four *mahals* of Tonk, Toda, Malpura (including Fagi) and Barwada were secured for him as his appanage. Holkar stood security for the payment of this amount.⁷⁸

In July 1748 a Maratha army under the command of Holkar and Gangadhar Tatya invaded Jaipur territory. Tonk, Toda and Malpura were occupied and handed over to Madho Singh. The Marathas were joined by Ummed Singh, Durjan Sal, and several other Rajput chiefs and vassals of Jaipur. In August 1748 Ishwari Singh was defeated at Bagru, 23 miles east of Sambhar town. He had to make peace on terms dictated by the Marathas: to give five *parganahs* to Madho Singh and to restore Bundi to Ummed Singh. The Marathas left his territory.⁷⁹ Ishwari Singh lived in peace for more than two years.

Ishwari Singh's reign saw the beginning of that internal decay which paralysed Jaipur during the last quarter of the eighteenth and the first quarter of the nineteenth century. He was neither a good administrator nor a capable leader of men. In February 1747 he lost his able minister, Aya Mal Khatri. He was not only a good diplomat; he was gifted with literary talents, and under the pen-name of Agahi he edited two collections of Aurangzib's letters. He was succeeded as minister by his son Keshav-das, who was, however, poisoned in August 1750 by Ishwari Singh on a fabricated charge of treachery. Tod quotes a bardic song: "Esuri forfeited all hopes of regality, when he slew that great minister Kesho-das."⁸⁰ Vidyadhar, the old statesman of Sawai Jai Singh's time, was now an invalid. Shibnath Bhava, an old and loyal general, was thrown into prison with

77 *Itihāśik Patra-ryuṇahār*, II, 68, 76. SPD, II, 11, XXI, 17, XXVII, 18, 19, 26.

78 Vad, *Selections*, III, pp. 140-41.

79 *Vamao Bhāskar*, 3493-3525. Rajwade, *Marathanchya Itihāśāchin Sadhanen*, VI, pp. 291, 648. *Purandare Daftari*, I, 185, 196. Tod (*Annals of Hararati*, Chapter IV) is wrong in saying that Ishwari Singh committed suicide after the humiliating peace at Bagru.

80 *Annals of Hararati*, Chapter IV.

his entire family. Deprived of the services of all able advisers, Ishwari Singh relied on a barber and an elephant-driver. Naturally disorder paralysed the administration and chaos gradually convulsed the state.⁸¹

One immediate effect of the breakdown of the administration was Ishwari Singh's inability to discharge his financial liabilities to the Marathas. The Maratha collector complained to Poona that the Jaipur government paid no heed to the matter and merely put off payment from day to day. The situation was aggravated by the murder of Keshav-das who was friendly to the Marathas. When his family appealed to the Marathas for avenging his cruel death, the peshwa decided to send an expedition against Jaipur. Towards the close of 1750 Malhar Rao Holkar and Gangadhar Tatyā appeared near Jaipur city and refused to accept Ishwari Singh's offer of two lakhs of rupees. Unable either to fight or to pay a larger sum to pacify the Marathas, Ishwari Singh committed suicide on 12 December 1750.⁸²

At this crisis the old minister Vidyadbar and another old servant of the state, Hargovind Natani, pacified the people and contacted the invaders. The Marathas came and occupied the capital. Madho Singh was placed on the throne. The Marathas were reinforced by the arrival of Jayappa Sindhiā in January 1751. They had been promised a heavy ransom, but now they demanded the cession of one-third or one-fourth of the territory of Jaipur. In spite of his intimate connection with the Marathas Madho Singh refused to accept this preposterous demand. Unable to expel the Marathas by force, he tried to murder their generals, but all his plans failed. The people of Jaipur city, however, exasperated by the harshness of the invaders, massacred about 1500 Marathas, and wounded 1000, on 10 January 1751. It is difficult to ascertain whether this massacre was a spontaneous outburst of the Rajputs against their oppressors, or the result of a deliberate plan of Madho Singh. In any case, even in the villages the Rajputs killed the Marathas. The Maratha army withdrew from Jaipur city. Conscious of the numerical weakness of the Maratha forces at Jaipur their leaders agreed to make peace on payment of the ransom previously agreed upon, in addition to compensation for the property plundered by the rioters. The difficulties of the Maratha army were increased by the scarcity of provisions. So Malhar Rao Holkar left Jaipur territory in February 1751. Thus the long war of succession in Jaipur came to an end. In spite of their unforeseen discomfiture at the last moment the Marathas were able to have their

⁸¹ SPD, II, 1, 15.

⁸² SPD, II, 19, 31; XXI, 34. *Vansoo Bhāskar*. 3808-16.

nominee installed as ruler of the state and to strengthen their hold over Rajputana as a result of their intervention in this protracted struggle.⁸³

BUNDI: END OF CIVIL WAR

The long contest for the throne of Bundi also came to an end about the same time. After Sawai Jai Singh's death in 1743 Ummed Singh, then a minor, laid siege to Bundi with the help of Durjan Sal, the Maharao of Kotah (1723-57). Bundi was then held by an officer of the Jaipur state. Durjan Sal's general, Gobindram Nagar, hired a contingent from Fakhr-ud-daulah, the Mughal viceroy of Gujarat. In July 1744 Ummed Singh occupied Bundi, which Dalel Singh could not recover even with the assistance of an army sent by Ishwari Singh. Then Aya Mal Khatri, the minister of Jaipur, secured for his master the support of the Marathas which Ummed Singh on his part had sought in vain.

Ishwari Singh captured Bundi, Kotah was bombarded by his Maratha allies. Durjan Sal was compelled to cede to the Marathas the fort and district of Kaprani (April 1745). After the retirement of the Marathas Ummed Singh reoccupied Bundi in July 1745, but in August Bundi was recaptured by a Jaipur army.

The part played by Ummed Singh in the events leading to the battle of Rajmahal (March 1747), has been referred to above. After Ishwari Singh's defeat at Bagru (August 1748) Ummed Singh was placed on the throne of Bundi (October 1748).⁸⁴ It was a costly success: Ummed Singh had to pay a heavy price for the help which he had received from the Marathas. The recovered patrimony was reduced (says Tod) to 'a heap of cotton'. The town and district of Patan on the left bank of the Chambal had to be surrendered to Malhar Rao Holkar, whom he called *mamu* or maternal uncle. He was exposed to the dominant influence and avarice of the insatiable Marathas.⁸⁵ In addition to ten lakhs in cash, he had to pay *chauth*, which was farmed to Malhar Rao Holkar and Jayappa Sindhi, from June 1751 onwards, for a fixed sum of Rs 75,000 payable annually to the Satara treasury. Even a personal visit to the Deccan brought Ummed Singh no relief from his crushing burden.⁸⁶

MARATHAS IN MARWAR

During the long reign of Bijay Singh (1752-92) Marwar came to the verge of dissolution. For this decline of a vigorous state his

⁸³ SPD, II, 31; XXVII, 64, 65. *Vamsa Bhaskar*, 3608-22.

⁸⁴ *Vamsa Bhaskar*, 3354-61, 3374-3414, 3455-75, 3534-42.

⁸⁵ *Annals of Haravati*, Chapter IV.

⁸⁶ *Vamsa Bhaskar*, 3587-88, 3603, 3613-22. Vad. *Selections*, III, pp. 129, 143.

weak and unwarlike character was partly responsible, but the difficulties which confronted him should not be overlooked. Apart from the constant dread of Maratha invasions and the lingering rivalry of Ram Singh, the growing power of the turbulent Rathor nobility embarrassed him. The aristocracy in Marwar", says Tod, "has always possessed more power than in any of the sister principalities around. The cause may be traced to their first settlement in the desert,⁸⁷ and it has been kept in action by the peculiarities of their condition, especially in that protracted struggle for the rights of the minor Ajit, against the despotism of the empire."⁸⁸ Unable to keep the nobles in check, Bijay Singh tried to keep them engaged by finding them occupation in military adventures. He carried his arms against some desert tribes and occupied Amarkot, 'the key to the valley of the Indus'. He also occupied the rich district of Godwar, which had been ruled by the princes of Mewar for nearly five centuries.⁸⁹

Although Maratha nominees sat on the thrones of Jaipur and Bundi, Bakht Singh owed nothing to Maratha aid; his rival Ram Singh was, however, a 'creature of the Deccanis'⁹⁰ and never anxious to 'redeem his birthright' under their banner. He sought Maratha aid after Bakht Singh's death 'in conjunction with the prince of Amber'. In June 1754 a Maratha army led by Jayappa Sindhia invaded Marwar with orders to restore Ram Singh to the throne. This army, 10,000 strong, was reinforced by about 15,000 Rathors collected by Ram Singh. A battle fought at Merta on 15 September 1754 resulted in Bijay Singh's complete defeat and his hasty flight to Nagour. "The lord of Marwar who, on that morning, commanded the lives of one hundred thousand Rajpoots, was indebted for his safety to the mean conveyance of a cart and pair of oxen."⁹¹ Jayappa Sindhia and Ram Singh pursued him, plundered Merta and besieged Nagour.

Although the peshwa was anxious to free Jayappa Sindhia's army from the entanglement in Marwar, that ambitious general was bent upon securing the whole of Marwar for Ram Singh. Jalore was recovered by Bijay Singh in March 1755. On 24 July 1755 Jayappa Sindhia was murdered in his camp by Bijay Singh's envoy, who was unable to tolerate the Maratha general's haughty declaration that he would collect tribute by the stroke of his shoes.⁹²

The Marathas soon recovered from the shock and continued their

⁸⁷ See *Proceedings of Rajasthan History Congress*, 1967, 61-69.

⁸⁸ *Annals of Marwar*, Chapter XIII.

⁸⁹ See Hieu, *Glories of Marwar and the Glorious Rathors*, 186, 188.

⁹⁰ Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, II (2nd ed.), 123.

⁹¹ *Annals of Marwar*, Chapter XIII. Phalke, *Shindhe Shahi Itihāsachin Sādhanen*, I, pp. 99-124.

⁹² SPD, II, 148; XXVII, 116. *Chahār Gulgāz*, 400b. *Vamsa Bhāskar*, 3649-52.

operations under the leadership of Jayappa Sindhia's son Jankoji and brother Dattaji. The Rathor strongholds rapidly fell and the Marathas spread over the 'land of Maroo'. Bijay Singh tried to build up an anti-Maratha coalition with Madho Singh of Jaipur, the emperor, Suraj Mal Jat and the Ruhela Afghans; none but Madho Singh joined him. The Marathas defeated a Jodhpur force at Godawas (32 miles north-east of Jalor). A Jaipur army was defeated in October 1755. Successive defeats, famine and the arrival of 10,000 Maratha troops under Antaji Manakeshwari at last made it impossible for Bijay Singh to continue resistance. In February 1756 he made peace on three principal conditions. The fort and district of Ajmer were to be ceded to the Marathas in full sovereignty. A war indemnity of 50 lakhs was to be paid. The Rathor state was to be partitioned; half the territory (including the city of Jalor) was to be handed over to Ram Singh, and the other half (including the cities of Jodhpur, Nagour and Merta) was to be ruled by Bijay Singh.⁹³

As Bijay Singh was neither willing nor able to pay the enormous war indemnity of 50 lakhs of rupees, he was constantly in dread of fresh Maratha invasions. Moreover, his inveterate enemy, Ram Singh, found shelter in Jaipur, and Madho Singh often threatened to restore him by force. Marwar passed through a long period of uneasy peace. Ram Singh died in 1773. The next phase of Marwar's struggle against the Marathas started in 1787 when Jaipur and Jodhpur concluded a defensive alliance against Mahadji Sindhia.

The long rivalry between Bijay Singh and Ram Singh ruined Marwar. It was a civil war in the worst sense of the term, for some of the most valiant Rathor families remained loyal to Ram Singh who possessed some qualities attractive to the Rajputs. Bijay Singh was weak in character and lacking in military qualities. The later years of his life were 'engrossed by sentimental folly with a young beauty of the Oswal tribe'. He was a Vaishnav of the Vallabhachari sect, and this 'young beauty' was treated as his Radha 'on whom he lavished all the honours due to his legitimate queens'. She controlled the administration through a horse-tamer named Bhairo Sani. Her intrigues were partly responsible for disputed succession which followed Bijay Singh's death in 1793. He left his dominions curtailed, his sons and grandsons mutually opposed to each other...⁹⁴

JAIPUR : MADHO SINGH AND MARATHAS

It is necessary now to turn to the affairs of Jaipur. We have seen how Madho Singh adopted a definitely anti-Maratha policy immedi-

⁹³ SPD, II, 54, 58, 62, 63, 65; XXI, 70, 82, 83, 85; XXVII, 128.

⁹⁴ *Annals of Marwar*, Chapter XIII.

ately after his accession to the throne after Ishwari Singh's suicide in December 1750. After Malhar Rao Holkar's departure from Jaipur in February 1751 Madho Singh did not pay his dues to the Marathas, which amounted to no less than twelve lakhs of rupees. During the period from February 1751 to May 1752 the Marathas were entangled in the affairs of Avadh and Hyderabad; so no steps could be taken to realise contributions from the Rajput princes, who paid nothing except under military pressure. The renewal of Maratha activities in Rajputana was marked by Jayappa Sindhia's invasion of Marwar in May 1752. In October 1753 Raghunath Rao entered Kotah and then proceeded to the Jat country through Jaipur territory. Madho Singh saved his kingdom from desolation by promising to pay 16½ lakhs of rupees, of which more than ten lakhs were paid to Jayappa Sindhia in April 1755.

After the murder of Jayappa Sindhia in July 1755 Madho Singh co-operated with Bijay Singh for the expulsion of the Marathas from Rajputana. He recruited new troops in Malwa, invited the co-operation of the chiefs of Bundelkhand, and compelled the Maratha agent stationed at Jaipur to commit suicide. A large Jaipur army, consisting of 25,000 men, including contingents from Shalpur, Rupnagar, Karauli and Hadavati, advanced for the relief of Nagour (which was then being invested by the Marathas) under the Jaipur general, Anurudh Singh Khangarot. In October 1755 this army was completely defeated by the Marathas. Anurudh Singh took shelter at Didwana (55 miles north-east of Nagour), where he was completely blockaded by the new Maratha army brought from the Jamuna region by Antaji Manakeshwar. Madho Singh then secured the release of his blockaded army by promising five lakhs of rupees to the Marathas.⁹⁵

The next Maratha invasion of Jaipur—led by Raghunath Rao—took place in April 1757. He besieged Barwada (16 miles north-west of Sawari Madhopur railway station) which belonged to the Shekhawats and demanded from Madho Singh 40 to 50 lakhs in cash in addition to the cession of some important districts. Madho Singh refused to yield to these exorbitant demands and prepared for fighting. Raghunath soon found that his position was untenable. He had no money, supplies were scarce, and Barwada could not be taken. So, instead of fighting, he agreed to accept eleven lakhs from Madho Singh and left Rajputana in July 1757.⁹⁶

A year later—in September 1758—Jankoji Sindhia entered Jaipur territory and compelled Madho Singh to promise payment of 36 lakhs

⁹⁵ SPD, II, 49, 50, 51, 54, 55, 59, 62, 63, 65, 67; XXI, 70, 71, 73, 74, 76, 77, 80, 82, 85; XXVII, 112, 117, 119, 128 275.

⁹⁶ SPD, XXI, 120, 121.

in four years.⁹⁷ The Marathas came again in 1759 under Malhar Rao Holkar. Jaipur was his special target. Defeating the Rajputs in a pitched battle at Lakhori in November he laid siege to Barwada and occupied that strong fort. But before he could consolidate his position he was called away to join Dattaji Sindhia to resist the impending advance of Ahmad Shah Ahdali towards Delhi. So Holkar started for Delhi in haste on 2 January 1760.⁹⁸

MARATHAS IN MEWAR

In Mewar the weakness of the rulers was primarily responsible for growing confusion and anarchy. Jagat Singh II (1734-51) is thus described by Tod : "Addicted to pleasure, his habits of levity and profligacy totally unfitted him for the task of governing his country at such a juncture; he considered his elephant fights of more importance than keeping down the Mahrattas."⁹⁹ The only redeeming feature of his character was his patronage of arts. He 'greatly enlarged the palace, and expended \$250,000 in embellishing the islets of the Peshola'. He also constructed villas 'scattered over the valley'. But Mewar could hardly afford such luxury. He instituted 'many of those festivals devoted to idleness and dissipation' which were 'firmly rooted' at Udaipur in Tod's days.¹⁰⁰ The two rulers who followed him—Pratap Singh II (1751-54) and Raj Singh II (1754-61)—were little entitled to bear those illustrious names. Ari Singh (1761-73) had an 'ungovernable temper'.¹⁰¹

The exploitation of Mewar by the Marathas had begun in the reign of Jagat Singh II. As we have seen, he promised in 1736 to pay to the peshwa Rs 1,50,000 as tribute per year. This arrangement remained in force for ten years; it was repudiated by Jagat Singh in 1747. He played a prominent part in the war of succession in Jaipur which followed Sawai Jai Singh's death in 1743 supporting the claim of his nephew Madho Singh against that of Ishwari Singh. In the battle of Rajmahal the Sisodis did not evince 'that gallantry which must have its source in moral strength'.¹⁰²

Pratap Singh's claim to the throne was contested by his uncle Nathji who offered to pay 15 lakhs to the Marathas for their aid.¹⁰³ The fief of Rampura granted by rana Sangram Singh of Madho

⁹⁷ SPD, II, 94, 95, 96, 101, XXVII, 290, 298.

⁹⁸ SPD, II, 113, 115, 117.

⁹⁹ Annals of 'Mewar' Chapter XV

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid. Chapter XVI.

¹⁰² Ibid. Chapter XV.

¹⁰³ SPD, XXI, 58. Annals of Mewar. Chapter XVI.

Singh of Jaipur, was alienated by the latter to Malhar Rao Holkar; 'this was the first limb severed from Mewar'.¹⁰⁴

The Marathas were always in pressing need of money; they did not forget that Mewar was a consistent defaulter. In 1753 they thought of taking bonds from Pratap Singh for five lakhs.¹⁰⁵ In 1757 Raghunath Rao, while marching to Jaipur territory through Mewar, took a ransom of one lakh from Jawad and plundered Ranikheda. In 1759 Jankoji Sindhia laid contribution on Mewar. In 1758 the peshwa directed his agents in Rajputana to realise money from the rana even by harsh measures.¹⁰⁶ The repeated depredations of the Marathas 'so exhausted this country' that Raj Singh II had to ask pecuniary aid from the Brahmin collector of the tribute, to enable himself to marry the Rathore chieftain's daughter'.¹⁰⁷ In 1765 Mahadji Sindhia realised five lakhs from Ari Singh. Next year the rana had to promise payment of Rs 26,30,221 in four years.¹⁰⁸

Raj Singh was a minor at the time of his accession, he died before attaining majority. He was succeeded by his uncle Ari Singh. The new ruler was 'accused of having unfairly acquired the crown by the removal of his nephew'; in Tod's opinion, however, there was no 'direct confirmation of the crime'. But Ari Singh had no right to expect the inheritance he obtained', for he belonged to the second class of nobles, holding a seat below the sixteen chief nobles. Moreover, 'his defects of character... had kindled too many enmities' even before his accession, and he made his position worse by his 'insolent demeanour' which estranged the powerful chiefs of Sadri and Deogarh. The result was the formation of a party of nobles pledged to depose Ari Singh. A youth called Ratan Singh, 'declared to be the posthumous son' of Raj Singh, was set up as his lawful successor and 'made a rallying point for the disaffected who soon comprehended the greater portion of the nobles, while out of the sixteen greater chiefs five only withheld the defection'. The pretender was formally installed at Kamalmer and decrees were issued in his name. A full-scale civil war broke out; the inevitable Maratha intervention followed.¹⁰⁹

Mahadji Sindhia was won over for the pretender's cause. In May 1769 he came to Mewar, and at his request Tukoji Holkar also joined him. Soon differences arose between the two Maratha generals about

¹⁰⁴ *Annals of Mewar*, Chapter XVI *Ponna Residency Correspondence*, VIII, 14.

¹⁰⁵ SPD, II, 34.

¹⁰⁶ SPD, XXI, 167, 172.

¹⁰⁷ *Annals of Mewar*, Chapter XVI.

¹⁰⁸ Vad, *Selections*, IX, pp. 288-89.

¹⁰⁹ *Annals of Mewar*, Chapter XVI.

the policy to be pursued. In June 1769 Tukoji Holkar went to Kotah. As Ari Singh was in a position to offer better terms than Ratan Singh, Mahadji abandoned the latter's cause. Ari Singh had to promise to pay 64 lakhs. A substantial portion of this heavy contribution, amounting to 33 lakhs, was to be paid immediately; for the balance the districts of Jawad, Jiran, Nimach and Morwan were placed under the joint administration of Rajput and Maratha officers. This arrangement remained in force till 1774, when Mahadji Sindhia dismissed the rana's officers and appropriated these districts. Thus the intervention of the Marathas in a disputed succession cost Mewar, in addition to a large sum of money, four important districts.¹¹⁰ "Their recovery", says Tod, "was stipulated by the ambassadors of the Rana in the treaty of A.D. 1817 with the British government: but our total ignorance of the past transactions of these countries, added to our amicable relations with Sindhia, prevented any pledge of re-union of these districts..."¹¹¹

Another district which Mewar lost as a result of this civil war was 'the rich province of Godwar, the most fruitful of all her possessions', which was 'confided' by Ari Singh 'to the care of Bijay Singh of Jodhpur. His purpose was 'to prevent its resources being available to the Pretender, whose residence, Komulmeer, commanded the approach to it'. Bijay Singh and his successors never returned Godwar to Mewar. In 1771 Ari Singh was killed by the heir of Bundi in course of hunting, 'a colour of pretext' being 'afforded in a boundary dispute regarding a patch of land yielding oil a few good mangoes'.¹¹²

RAJPUTS AFTER PANIPAT

Meanwhile the third battle of Panipat (14 January 1761) had struck a severe blow at Maratha power in north India, and foreshadowed large-scale political repercussion upon the weak states which had so far suffered from Maratha invasions. After the battle Ahmad Shah Abdali called upon the Rajput princes to join him with tribute and troops for driving the Marathas out of the Mughal empire. Madho Singh of Jaipur was asked to present himself with a crore of rupees. Naturally alarmed, he appealed to the peshwa and offered to meet him at Bundi along with other Rajput princes. The peshwa rebuked him for his anti-Maratha activities in the past and reminded him that the Marathas could retire beyond the Narmada if the foreigners defeated them, but the Rajputs had no such escape. The crisis, how-

¹¹⁰ SPD, XXIX, 87, 233-45. G. H. Ojha, *History of Udaipur* (Hindi II), 656.

¹¹¹ *Annals of Mewar*, Chapter XVI.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

ever, proved to be temporary. Soon afterwards the Abdali left for his own country (March 1761) and the Rajput princes were relieved of the threat implied in his call¹¹³

The collapse of the Maratha military power was followed by anti-Maratha risings in the Gangetic Doab in Bundelkhand, in Rajputana as also in Malwa. Contemporary Marathi documents give us a graphic picture of the disturbances which followed the sudden and unexpected dissolution of Maratha authority in those regions. In Rajputana, as a Maratha agent wrote 'all the Rajas and Raiwadas' turned against them¹¹⁴. The leadership of this anti-Maratha movement was assumed by Madho Singh who was then the most powerful among the Rajput princes. He had many advantages. His capital was strongly fortified and almost impregnable. Most of the villages in his territory had protective walls. His subjects were a martial population. He had no domestic rival although his relations with his nobles were not at all happy. But he did not possess that strength of character without which spectacular political success could not be won. Moreover his patronage of Ram Singh and the consequent hostility to Bijay Singh of Mirwar fatally weakened Rajput opposition to the Marathas. Madho Singh's inability to pursue a consistent policy was also one of the important factors leading to the recovery of Maratha power after 1761.

As soon as the Afghans in incuse was over Madho Singh made serious efforts to organize an anti-Maratha coalition. He sent envoys to Najib-ud-daulah Yaqub Ali (the Abdali's agent in Delhi) and the puppet emperor Shah Alam II. He received assurances of support from some Rajput princes such as the rulers of Bundi, Kotah and Karauli. His hostility to the Marathas was no longer concealed.¹¹⁵ In October 1761 his troops began operations against Maratha outposts but resistance came from Malhar Rao Holkar on whom had fallen the task of restoring Marathi authority in Malwa and Rajputana. After winning some minor successes in the border tract between Malwa and Rajputana in the summer of 1761 he waited at Indore during the rainy season and entered Rajputana through the Mukundara pass in November 1761. He was reinforced on his way by 3000 troops sent by the ruler of Kotah. A large Jaipur army was then defeated near Manotol (on the east bank of the river Banganga) on 29 November 1761.¹¹⁶ Tod's statement that this battle (called by him battle of Batwara) was won by the Kotah force under the leadership

¹¹³ J. N. Sarkar, *Modern Review*, May 1946.

¹¹⁴ SPD, XXIX, 81.

¹¹⁵ SPD, XXI, 91; XXVII, 114, 287, 289, 271; XXIX, 81.

¹¹⁶ SPD, II, 5, 6; XXI, 92-94; XXVII, 276, XXIX, 16-22, 27.

of Zalim Singh¹¹⁷ is contradicted by contemporary Marathi letters, which clearly show that the Marathas really decided the issue.

This decisive battle destroyed Madho Singh's fond hope of uprooting Maratha power from the north and restored Maratha prestige throughout Hindustan. Madho Singh retreated to Jaipur, took measures for the defence of the capital against the apprehended Maratha attack, and removed his family to Amber for safety. Negotiations were opened with Malhar Rao Holkar, who had meanwhile come to Manoharpur (40 miles north of Jaipur) to enforce his demand for tribute. The Kachhwaha capital was saved from imminent danger as Holkar's attention was diverted to Bundelkhand where an attack had been launched by Shah Alam II and Shuja-ud-daulah. He left Jaipur territory in February 1762.¹¹⁸

For about three years after the battle of Mangrol the Marathas were too busy in the south to interfere effectively in Rajputana. In October 1764 Malhar Rao Holkar returned to Rajputana to realise money from Madho Singh but he was called away to join the Jat campaign against Nerbudh-daulah. In 1765 Madho Singh established friendly relations with Holkar, he paid five lakhs and promised further payment.¹¹⁹

RAJPUTS AND JATS

Tod points out that Madho Singh's failure against the Marathas was due to the rise of the Jats.¹²⁰ The patronage of Sawai Jai Singh had enabled Badan Singh to assume the leadership of the Jats. Although he was a powerful chief he styled himself a *Thakur* and represented himself as a vassal of Jaipur. He used to attend the *Dasahara darbar* held at Jaipur. He died in June 1756, and was succeeded by his adopted son Suraj Mal, the ablest statesman and warrior that the Jat race has ever produced. He was killed in a battle in December 1763. He was one of the most powerful ruling chiefs of Hindustan but he continued Badan Singh's tradition, attended the *Dasahara darbar* at Jaipur and paid tribute as a humble vassal to Madho Singh. Towards the close of his life, however, Suraj Mal became suspicious of Madho Singh's designs and refused to attend the *Dasahara darbar*.

His successor, Jawahir Singh, openly adopted a policy of hostility towards Jaipur. In December 1765 he joined his Sikh allies in incursions into the Jaipur territory. Madho Singh invoked the assistance of the Marathas, the arrival of a contingent from Sindhia's army com-

¹¹⁷ *Annals of Itaticuti*, Chapter V.

¹¹⁸ SPD, II, 7* XXIX, 27, 33, 34, 37.

¹¹⁹ SPD, XXIX, 99, 102, 107, 108.

¹²⁰ *Annals of Amber*, Chapter III.

elled the invaders to retreat. Madho Singh retaliated by giving shelter to Nahar Singh, Jawahir Singh's brother and rival for the throne. In 1767, after Nahar Singh's death, Jawahir Singh asked Madho Singh to surrender Nahar Singh's widow, children and treasure. As the lady refused to leave the protection of the Jaipur court, Madho Singh could not accept Jawahir Singh's demand. Moreover, Madho Singh was anxious to protect the district of Narnol against the Jat ruler's hostile designs.

Towards the end of the year 1767 Jawahir Singh came to Jaipur territory at the head of a large army well supported by artillery. At Pushkar he met Bijoy Singh of Jodhpur who treated him as an equal in spite of his humble origin. On his way to his own country from Pushkar he was attacked by a Jaipur army consisting of 16,000 horse besides infantry. A battle took place at Maonda (23 miles south-west of Narnol) on 14 December 1767. The Jaipur army lost two to three thousand soldiers and most of its principal chiefs. It has been said that 'none but boys of ten remained to represent the baronial houses of Jaipur'. Tod says that the battle 'proved destructive to Amber, in the loss of almost every chieftain of note'. For the Jats the battle was no less disastrous. They left all their artillery, tent and baggage in the field. They returned home pillaged, stupefied and overthrown', says Wendel. He adds: "The fortune of the Jats has been shaken and the result has been fatal to them."¹²¹ Emboldened by the discomfiture of Jawahir Singh, Madho Singh invaded the Jat territory and defeated the Jats and their Sikh allies at Kama on 29 February 1768. On the arrival of fresh Sikh forces the Rajputs retreated to Jaipur. Soon afterwards Madho Singh died (6 March 1768) and Jawahir Singh was murdered (July 1768).

The battle of Maonda was, according to Tod,¹²² 'the indirect cause of the formation of Macheri into an independent state'. Pratap Singh of the Naruka clan held the fief of Macheri. For some fault he was banished by Madho Singh. He fled to the Jat territory and received from Jawahir Singh 'Sirna (sanctuary) and lands for his maintenance'. Though 'enjoying protection and hospitality' at Bharatpur he felt 'the national insult, in that the Jat should dare unceremoniously to traverse' his country. He might have seen in Madho Singh's crisis an 'opening for reconciliation', or he might have been influenced by 'a pure spirit of patriotism'. However, his service earned for him Madho Singh's favour and the restoration of his fief.

¹²¹ Wendel, 108. SPD, XXIX, 192. *Vam-a Bhāskar*, 3720-27. *Calendar of Persian Correspondence*, II, 789-91. *Annals of Amber*, Chapter III. Qanungo, *History of the Jats*, 211.

¹²² *Annals of Amber*, Chapter III.

The decline of the Jat power enabled Pratap Singh to occupy Alwar and Lachhmangarh. Taking advantage of the weakness of Madho Singh's successors he occupied as many as nine rich districts of Jaipur. The new state, called Alwar, became a factor in the politics of Rajputana and grew important enough to conclude a treaty with the British government in November 1803.¹²³

Madho Singh was not altogether devoid of those admirable qualities which had distinguished his father's character. His interest in science attracted learned men to Jaipur which 'eclipsed even the sacred Benares'. Tradition makes him the builder of seven cities of which the one named after him—Madhopur—was 'the most secure of the commercial cities of Rajwarra'. He left his throne to his minor son Prithvi Singh (1768-78). The regency was held by the prince's step-mother who also followed Ishwari Singh's practice of raising to power low-born favourites rather than high-born aristocrats. Khush-hali Ram Bohra, a Brahmin who was originally a porter of Ganges water for the use of the ruling family, gradually secured her favour and became chief minister. His ability and loyalty enabled him to play a leading part in Jaipur affairs for many years. The command of the army was entrusted to Raj Singh Kachhwaha, a common trooper or *bargir*. The revenue department was put in charge of a Muslim elephant-driver named Firuz. These appointments were naturally disliked by the hereditary nobles who could not reconcile themselves to exclusion from power. These internal dissensions were utilised by Pratap Singh Naruka, the ambitious vassal of Macheri. During the long reign of Prithvi Singh's brother and successor, Sawai Pratap Singh (1778-1803), the Kachhwaha state came to the brink of dissolution.

MINOR STATES

Of the minor states of Rajputana not much can be said here. The Rathor state of Bikaner had risen to political importance during the Mughal period, but in the eighteenth century its chiefs could not distinguish themselves by any remarkable exploit. Seven reigns—those of Swarup Singh, Sujan Singh, Zorawar Singh, Gaj Singh, Raj Singh, Pratap Singh and Surat Singh—covered the period 1710-1828. Swarup Singh died fighting for the recovery of Adoni which the Mughal government had resumed. Nothing worth mention took place in the reigns of Sujan Singh and Zorawar Singh. Gaj Singh spent his long reign in border strife with the Bhattis and the Muslim ruler of Bahawalpur. Raj Singh and Pratap Singh—both minors—

¹²³ Aitchison, *Treaties, Engagements and Sannads*, III, 322-23.

were murdered by Surat Singh. During his long reign Surat Singh suppressed his 'turbulent countrymen'—the Bidawats—and fought against his 'powerful and turbulent' neighbours—the Daudputras. In the early years of the nineteenth century he joined a coalition against Jodhpur in support of a pretender, Dhonkal Singh, and spent nearly five years' revenue of his desert state. The distance of Bikaner from the routes usually taken by the Marathas and its location in the desert kept it immune from Deccani depredations. Yet Tod, writing in 1814, found 'the country... annually deteriorating in population and wealth'.¹²⁴

The Bhatti state of Jaisalmer, covering the tract of country known in earlier times as *Marusthali*, was brought under Mughal supremacy in the reign of Shah Jahan. The reigns of Jaswant Singh, Akhi Singh and Mulraj covered the period 1703-1820. The 'demoralisation of the Bhatti principality' was completed during the reign of Mulraj (1761-1820) who entered into a treaty of subordinate alliance with the East India Company. The Bhatti rulers kept themselves busy in constant border strife with the neighbouring Muslim chieftains. As in the case of Bikaner, the geographical situation of Jaisalmer saved it from the depredations of the Marathas.

To the Hada states of Bundi and Kotah some references have been made in the foregoing narrative. The territories of the two states originally constituted a single unit known as Hadavati, 'the country of the Hadas'. After partition the Chambal separated Bundi, ruled by the elder branch, from Kotah comprising the domains of the younger branch. The Hadas belonged to the Chauhan clan.

Ummed Singh of Bundi, who recovered his patrimony after a long struggle, was unable to restore the prosperity of his state owing to Maratha depredations. He abdicated in 1770 and travelled as a pilgrim "from the glacial fountains of the Ganges to the southern promontory of Ramaiser, and from the hot wells of Seeta in Aracan, and the Moloch of Orissa, to the Shrine of the Hindu Apollo at the world's end".¹²⁵ In 1771 his son and successor Ajit Singh killed the Maharama of Mewar, Ari Singh II, and himself died soon afterwards. Ajit Singh's infant son, Bishen Singh, was placed on the throne, and Ummed Singh once again governed the state as regent. Ummed Singh's 'varied and chequered life' came to a close in 1803.

The rivalry between Bundi and Kotah began after the death of Aurangzib and became an important factor in the troubled polities

¹²⁴ *Annals of Bikaner*, Chapter I.

¹²⁵ *Annals of Hararati*, Chapter IV. The 'hot wells of Seeta' are located at Sitakund the district of Chittagong in Bangladesh, and not in Arakan (Burma).

of Rajputana in the eighteenth century. Ram Singh of Kotah fell in the battle of Jajau, fighting for Azam against Muazzam whose cause was supported by Budh Singh of Bundi. The Kotah chief's choice was determined by his ambition to become the head of the Hadas. His successor Bhim Singh inherited this ambition and co-operated with Sawai Jai Singh in humiliating Bundi. Tod tells us that he invaded the city of Bundi and 'despoiled that capital of all the insignia of sovereign rule, its *nakarras*, or kettle-drums, with the celebrated *rinsankhy*, or water-shell, heirloom descended from the heroes of antiquity'. Bhim Singh secured the title of Maharao from the Maharaṇa of Mewar. He was succeeded by his eldest son Arjun Singh, who died without issue after a brief reign of four years. He left two brothers, Shyam Singh and Durjan Sal, who fought for the throne. Shyam Singh was killed. Durjan Sal ascended the throne in 1723. During his reign Kotah was repeatedly invaded by the Marathas and forced to save herself by paying tribute. As he left no issue he was succeeded by an adopted heir, Chhatra Sal. An attempt of Madho Singh of Jaipur to make Kotah a vassal state proved unsuccessful. Chhatra Sal was succeeded by his brother Gunan Singh in 1765. In 1770 Zalmi Singh became the guardian of Gunan Singh's infant son, Ummed Singh, and began that successful career which earned for him a reputation unrivalled in Rajputana and Central India.

RAJPUT DECADENCE.

Even a brief survey of the vicissitudes through which the Rajput states passed in the eighteenth century brings some painful factors into clear relief. A large share of the miseries suffered by the Rajputs during the period 1734-1818 was undoubtedly due to the greed and unscrupulousness of the Marathas. They were constantly in want of money, and to them the desert of Rajputana appeared to be as good a pagoda tree as the fertile Doab and the smiling plains of Bengal. Tod's exaggerated description of the Marathas as 'associations of vampires, who drained the very life blood wherever the scent of spoil attracted them',¹²⁶ is not devoid of truth. The Mughal emperors in a sense deserved the tribute which they drew from Rajputana, for they enforced internal as well as external peace, and afforded the Rajput princes sufficient scope for the display of their military ardour and administrative skill. But the Marathas rendered no service in exchange for the 'large sums they exacted by force. Instead of suppressing internal dissensions in the Rajput states, they utilised them for their own aggrandizement. When, in the eighteenth and early

nineteenth centuries, imperial generals like Mirza Najaf Khan and adventurers like Amir Khan devastated Rajputana, the Maratha overlords of the Rajputs did not come to their rescue. No Rajput prince was allowed to fight under the Maratha banner as a respected and valued vassal; the Maratha empire gained nothing from its associations with the Rajputs, although the part played by them in the extension and consolidation of the Mughal empire was even then a living memory. Had the Marathas utilised the Rajputs as the Mughals had done, the history of India in the eighteenth century would in all probability have flowed through different channels. But the champions of *Hindu Padshahi* did not respond to Sawai Jai Singh's sentiment: "Honour of all the Hindus is one and the same."¹²⁷

In criticising Maratha policy towards the Rajputs two important points should be remembered. In the first place, frequent invasions, and consequent devastations of territory, were rendered necessary by the persistent refusal of the Rajput princes to honour their agreements with the Marathas. They were determined not to pay promised contributions unless they were forced to do so. The Marathas knew this, and applied force whenever their demands were refused. Both the parties thus moved in a vicious circle, Rajputana lay prostrate under the heel of her oppressors. Secondly, the depredations caused by the Maratha armies grew in extent and horror with the increase of the non-Maratha element in the forces led by Sindha and Holkar. Malcolm remarks about Mahadji Sindha, "the countries under his own observation were well managed, as well all those where the inhabitants were peaceable and obedient; but in his efforts to reduce the chiefs of Hindustan, the princes of Rajputana, and the petty Rajas of Central India, to the state of subjects, he let loose all the irregular violence of his army; and the proceedings of some of those he employed to complete the subjugation of the Rajpoots, were marked by a spirit a rapacity and oppression, that has, perhaps never been surpassed even in the annals of the Marathas".¹²⁸ The horror committed by the Pindaris are generally reflected upon the whole course of Maratha relations with Rajputana, but this is hardly fair to the Maratha people.

While we must blame the Marathas for bringing to dust the descendants of those Rajput heroes who had fought for centuries in defence of their liberty and their faith, we must note with regret that the Rajputs of the eighteenth century were largely responsible for their own sufferings. The old clan feeling prevented unity even in

¹²⁷ Letter to Shahi, written probably in 1708. (*Proceedings of Rajput History Congress*, 1909, 64).

¹²⁸ Malcolm, *Memoir of Central India*, I, 129.

the face of overwhelming disaster. Long submission to the Mughals had weakened the feeling of patriotism; that love of liberty, which had been the key to Rajput history for centuries, was no longer an active force in Rajput life. The simple, straightforward Rajput warrior had learned all the arts of the Mughal courtier, and now he tried to rival the Maratha in political intrigue and barren diplomacy. The Mughal *harem* had cast its baneful influence on the private life of the Rajput princes and nobles; a descendant of Mirza Raja Jai Singh, Sawai Pratap Singh, dressed himself like a courtesan and danced in his *zenana* with bells tied to his ankles. Such men could not stand against the newborn imperial zeal of the Marathas, led by capable and ambitious leaders like Baji Rao I, Malhar Rao Holkar and Mahadji Sindlia. The Rajput was not yet a stranger to that reckless personal courage which had made him a hero of medieval romance; but personal courage counted little in longdrawn contests with large Maratha armies. The Europeanized infantry of the Marathas shattered the impregnable walls of medieval Rajput forts¹²⁹ and crushed the proud Rajput cavalry. But the Rajputs remained blind to the lessons of the age, and sent their cavalry to destruction in pitched battles with De Boigne's brigades. The nobles lost their accustomed place of honour in the councils of their princes, who gave their confidence to barbers, tailors, elephant-drivers and water-carriers. Assassination became a recognized political weapon. Society became so corrupt that even the royal *zenana* was occasionally polluted by immorality. Rajputana was on the verge of collapse from within while the Marathas were knocking at the gates from without.

129 Malcolm, *Memoir of Central India*, 1, 126-27.

CHAPTER TEN

RISE OF THE PESHWAS (1713-1740)

THE DECCAN IN 1707

THE YEAR 1707 is an important landmark in the history of the growth of the Maratha power and of the decline of the Mughal empire. The twenty-five years' War of Independence (1682-1707) carried on by the Maratha people ended in their military success. They frustrated the ambition of the Mughals to extend their political power in the Deccan. They drove them out from a large part of the Maratha country. Then *swaraya* territory was more or less liberated. Aurangzib died humiliated on 20 February 1707, with his grand political design frustrated, his armies shattered and his resources exhausted. For the Marathas the Mughal danger was over for the time being; their skill in resistance and superiority in military strategy yielded a rich dividend. The effectiveness of Maratha guerilla tactics was proved beyond doubt. They not only crippled the Mughal power in the south but also made daring raids into the neighbouring Mughal provinces of Aurangabad, Berar, Khandesh, Gujarat and Malwa. Marathwada, Berar, Khandesh and Baglan were Maratha territories though politically at the moment they were under the Mughals. They were naturally earmarked for annexation to the Maratha state. Gujarat and Malwa were the provinces from where the Mughals had entered, invaded and occupied the Maratha country. Karnatak bounded the Maratha country in the south. Shivaji had already established his rule in some parts of Karnatak. After the annexation of Bijapur and Golkonda (1686-87) the Mughals tried to oust the Marathas and to extend and consolidate their rule in Karnatak. By 1707 their failure stood revealed. The Marathas had then eyes on this area also for the security of their state and as a natural field for the extension of their power.

Such was the position, political and military, in the Deccan in 1707. From a long-range point of view Aurangzib's failure was due to his mordant political ambition, his intolerant religious policy, and his strategy of distrust. Behind the war with the Rajputs, the insurrections

of the Jats and the Bundelas, the rise of the Sikhs and the Maratha War of Independence lay his political short-sightedness and religious obscurantism. Despite his strenuous efforts the Mughal power suffered shipwreck in the Deccan. After Aurangzib's death the process of decline was accelerated by the fratricidal war of succession among his sons and grandsons. As the emperors lost their grip over policy and administration, political factions and selfish nobles tried to secure control over the central administration, while ambitious provincial satraps claimed virtual independence in their subalis.

CIVIL WAR: SHAHU AND TARABAII

The Maratha country suffered from two ruinous legacies left by the Mughals after their departure in 1707. One was the natural consequence of Mughal usurpation: ruthless desolation of the country during long years of war. The other was a new danger in the form of a civil war arising out of the struggle between Shahu and Tarabai. After Rajaram's death in 1700 his widow, Tarabai, had boldly directed the Maratha policy and the war against the Mughals; she had also guided successfully the internal affairs of the state. Not unnaturally, she was desirous of securing the kingship for her own son Shivaji although Shahu, Sambhaji's son, had a better title. Born on 18 May 1682, Shahu had been in Mughal captivity since 3 November 1689. Naturally he had not been able to take any active part in the War of Independence. He left the Mughal camp on 5 May 1707, being liberated by Azam Shah, Aurangzib's second son, when the war of succession started after the old emperor's death. He was recognized as the king of the Marathas, his right to the Maratha *swarajya* and to the *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* of the Deccan subalis of the Mughals was probably promised.¹ Mughal suzerainty was protected through the arrangement that he would rule as a vassal of the empire.

The intention of the Mughals was to create dissensions in the Maratha camp. They were not disappointed. Shahu's release was followed by a civil war among the Marathas which lasted from 1707 to 1714. It ended in Shahu's victory, but the Maratha state was permanently divided into two units (Satara and Kolhapur).

Shahu left Azam Shah's camp at Duraha near Bhopal and proceeded to Ahmadnagar where he arrived in August 1707. On his way he secured the support of leading sardars such as Mohan Singh Rawal of Bijagad, Amritrao Kadam Bande, the Bokils, the Purandares, Parsoji Bhonsle, the ancestor of the later Bhonsle rulers of Nagpur, Nemaji

¹ Elliot and Dowson, VII, 396, 408, 409.

Sindhia, Haibatrao Nimbalkar and Chimmaji Damodar. But Tarabai threw an open challenge. Her point was that Sambhaji's kingdom had been lost by him; the present kingdom was a fresh acquisition made by Rajaram and its legitimate ruler was his son Shivaji who had been crowned a few years ago. On 12 October 1707 Shahu led his troops to victory over Tarabai's troops at Khed on the north bank of the Bhima. Satara fell on the first day of January 1708, Tarabai and her son having already withdrawn for security to the fort of Panhala. Shahu's coronation ceremony was performed at Satara on 12 January 1708. Panhala fell in March; Tarabai ran away to Malvan on the west coast.

In 1711 Shahu's cause received a serious setback; some of his leading sardars went over to Tarabai. The most prominent among them, Chandrasen Jadhav, son of Dhanaji Jadhav, was a very wayward and irritable person. He became Shahu's *senapati* after his father's death. But following a quarrel with Balaji Vishwanath, a rising officer who became peshwa two years later and whom Shahu gave protection from his anger, he quarrelled with Shahu also. Shahu sent Haibatrao Nimbalkar to punish him for his overbearing conduct. Defeated by him, Chandrasen deserted to Tarabai and joined her party openly in 1711. Tarabai's strength lay in the support of such discontented and unprincipled sardars. Most of them played a double game; while pretending to be loyal to Shahu they secretly conspired against him and maintained contact with Tarabai. Chandrasen took the lead among them and sowed dissensions in Shahu's camp. He won over the pratinidhi, the Thorats, the Nimbalkars and others to Tarabai's side. He proposed to attack Satara and capture it. Daud Khan Panni, the Mughal deputy governor of the Deccan, encouraged him. It was Balaji Vishwanath who, with his new army and financial resources, was able to foil the plans of Chandrasen Jadhav and Tarabai and save Shahu from this difficult situation.

Balaji used diplomacy effectively to bring about Tarabai's fall at Kolhapur. He sided with the amatyā, Ramachandra Pant, Tarabai's former minister and adviser, who had no longer any real interest in her cause. Ramchandra Pant plotted with Rajashbai, the younger widow of Rajaram, to place her son Sambhaji on the throne in place of Tarabai's son Shivaji. This party succeeded in its plot. Tarabai and Shivaji were put in confinement and Sambhaji was declared as Chhatrapati in 1714. Thus Shahu's most formidable opponent was got rid of by a bloodless palace revolution. Balaji played a very astute part in this drama. Tarabai lived for 47 years more, passing most of her days behind prison walls. Chandrasen went over to the Mughals, accepted a jagir from the Nizam-ul-mulk, and fought against the Maratha state.

EARLY CAREER OF BALAJI VISHWANATH

It is to the credit of the first two peshwas, Balaji Vishwanath and Baji Rao I, that they successfully helped Shahu to extricate himself from various difficulties and dangers, to establish his rule firmly in his own state and to lay the foundations of a Maratha empire in the north. This new family of the peshwas, surnamed Bhat, came from Srivardhan in the Konkan below the Western Ghats. It was a family of hereditary *deshmukhs* or revenue officers of that place.² It belonged to the Chitpavan or Konkanastha branch of Maratha Brahmins who generally worked as clerks and accountants, or as administrators and revenue officers, under earlier rulers of the Deccan. In the *sucarajya* they found greater opportunity and larger scope for their native ability. They were among many families which acquired prominence by virtue of their valour and efficiency, loyalty and statesmanship.

Balaji Vishwanath seems to have left the Konkan because of persecution by the Sidijs. We find him employed in service in the Maratha state about the end of Sambhaji's reign. During Rajaram's reign we find him doing the work of *sarsubash* of the Poona territory. Thus he seems to have played some part and held some posts during the War of Independence. He worked under Dhanaji Jadhav at the time. He was thus very well acquainted with the conditions, personalities and policies of that period of war and turmoil. He was also well-versed in revenue and military matters. After Shahu's march into the Deccan we find him in 1708 still serving under Dhanaji who had gone over to Shahu and had become his *senapati* or commander-in-chief. In that capacity Balaji worked for Shahu's cause. On 20 November 1708 Shahu gave him the title of *senakarte* (*organizer of army*) for the purpose of collecting fresh troops and helping him to establish³ peace and order in the country.

In order to strengthen himself and to maintain the continuity of the state policy and administration Shahu preserved the old ministerial system. He confirmed the old ministers and officers who came over to his side. In place of those who went over to Tarabai or were found quite incompetent or disloyal in their work he generally appointed other members of the old families, and, if they were not available, he gave the posts to new men who had proved their ability in war, diplomacy and administration.

Balaji Vishwanath belonged to this new class of officers. His patron

² *Varshik Itieritta*, Shake 1837, 96, *Peshwayanchi Bakhar*, 5.

³ Sardesai, *Balaji Vishwanath*, 49-51. Rajwade, II, 7; IV, 33. *Itihasa Sangraha* 122-26. *Purandare Daftari*, Vol. I, 12, 21. SPD, VII, 1, 2, 40; XXXI, 74-80, 112.

and master, Dhanaji Jadhav, died in June 1708. With him Balaji had worked loyally and whole-heartedly for the cause of Shahu. But due to a quarrel with Dhanaji's son Chandrasen Jadhav over a petty incident he sought refuge and direct service with Shahu in 1711.⁴ He rose to the office of peshwa, i.e. the prime ministership of the Maratha state, on 17 November 1713, when the old occupant, Bahiropan Pingle, was found incompetent because of his failure in his campaign against Kanhoji Angre.⁵

After crowning himself Shahu sent a letter to the emperor Bahadur Shah in 1708 informing him of the political condition of his country and of what he had accomplished by then in the cause of establishing his authority, peace and order. The emperor, when marching to the south in 1708 to fight against Kam Baksh, acknowledged the letter and wrote in reply that Shahu should keep peace and order in the country according to the *farman* already issued at the time of his release. When the emperor reached Ahmadnagar in May 1708 he asked Shahu to help him. Accordingly Nemaji Sindhia was sent to join the imperial army. Kam Baksh was defeated and killed on 3 January 1709.

Shahu did not believe in breaking off with or opposing the Mughals, nor was it possible for him to do so at the time. A civil war was on hand. His own sardars often adopted a double policy. He wanted that the emperor should issue *farmans* recognizing his hereditary claims to the Maratha state and his rights of *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi*. This would strengthen his position not only against Tarabai's faction but also against the Mughal governors of the Deccan and the Mughal officers who were still holding portions of the Maratha country and refusing to recognize the Maratha king's authority and rights. Consequently he approached through his agents the emperor in 1709 when he was returning to the north. But Bahadur Shah, though willing to issue the *farmans* wanted by Shahu, did not do so on the advice of Munim Khan, his chief minister, because Tarabai also claimed the same authority and rights as Shahu did. His advice was that Shahu and Tarabai should decide the issue between themselves and then the necessary *farmans* would be issued to the party which succeeded in establishing unquestioned authority over the Maratha state.⁶ Neither Shahu nor Tarabai was fighting for the principle of complete independence as established by Shivaji. As a result of Bahadur Shah's policy Shahu was not able to get the Maratha-

4 SPD, VII, 13, *Shahu Bakhar*, 28, 29.

5 *Shahu Rozkurd*, 42. Rajwade, II, 7.

6 Rajwade, VII, 289. Elliot and Dowson, VII, 408, 409.

Mughal relations settled finally at that time. He had to continue his fight against Tarabai and her supporters, and against the machinations, conspiracies and rebellions of Maratha and Mughal officers working against him. Thus the Maratha civil war continued till 1714, when Tarabai was overthrown and Rajasbai succeeded to power at Kolhapur.

In all these difficulties which Shahu had to face, none proved a more loyal, reliable and capable officer on his side than Balaji. He created a loyal army, gathered a set of able and devoted officers, and procured sufficient money on the security of land grants. His valuable services secured for him a trusted and prominent place in the counsels of Shahu.

SHAHU AND MUGHAL GOVERNMENT

The original polity established by Shivaji suffered eclipse during the War of Independence and the subsequent civil war. Both brought to the fore military needs and the warlike aspects of government which led to the rise of Maratha feudalism. Though old officers, old forms and old families continued to occupy their traditional positions, new officers and new families also emerged during the upheaval, and generally speaking, new men took the direction of state affairs in their hands. Some old officers and families remained loyal to Tarabai's party; others went over to Shahu's side. Among other prominent men were those newly promoted by Shahu. This political process of change and the widely felt necessity of strong and able leadership during the troublous times transformed the character of the Maratha polity. It had to serve two purposes, one that of defending and organizing the *swarajya* and maintaining its useful traditions the other that of expanding Maratha territory and consolidating Maratha political and military power in order to meet the ever-present Mughal danger. This latter need created the new feudal system which alone could in those times consolidate border conquests. Naturally this aspect largely dominated the policy of the Maratha government.

A third factor which upset the organization of Shivaji's polity was the nature of Maratha-Mughal political relations and the attitude of Shahu towards the Mughal empire. In his policy towards the Mughals he was not an advocate of absolute independence for the Maratha state. He recognized the fact of the Mughal empire in India though not of India.⁷ He had no objection to its existence, but he was against its further encroachments and interference in the south. He wanted himself to be the sole ruler of the Deccan, even a representative

⁷ *Shahu Maharaj Charitra*, 25, 60-62, 75-85.

of the Mughal emperor in territories outside the Maratha *swarajya*.⁸ He was not prepared to give up the Maratha rights of *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi*.⁹ He was, however, always prepared to help the emperor against foreign invasion and internal rebellions. Because of this dual policy of partial independence on one side and undefined association with the Mughal empire on the other Shahu failed to establish a really independent Maratha state and to annex and absorb the territories conquered by his sardars. The theory of *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* and the rights flowing from it could not establish direct and permanent Maratha rule in the whole of the Deccan. Whatever its military value, politically it only promoted various entanglements and justified official interference on the part of Mughal governors and opposition on the part of Maratha officials. It was a system of double government, but the partners were at constant war with each other.

Shahu had a twofold task before him. One was to convert his *de jure* kingship of the Marathas to an active and *de facto* kingship. The other was that of coming to an agreement with the Mughals and settling their mutual relations in respect of territories outside the *swarajya*. The rights of *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* had to be formally acknowledged and defined, and the settlement given effect to by Mughal governors and officers. Otherwise there would be the ever-present danger of these men interfering with and encroaching upon the rights and territories of the Maratha state, fomenting internal dissensions and factions, seducing its sardars, and gradually subduing its border territories. Indeed, without an effective understanding with the Mughal government the Maratha state would be exposed to a permanent danger to its security and stability.

CONSOLIDATION AND STABILIZATION

Even before the end of the civil war Shahu had entrusted to Balaji the reduction of disloyal sardars like Khatavkars, Thorats and Chavans who were great thorns in the Maratha body politic. They had proved rebellious, traitorous and disturbers of peace and order in the country. Krishna Rao Khatavkar had deserted to Aurangzib after 1689. He secured the jagir of Khatav *parganah* and the title of 'maharaja' for his services to the emperor against his own people during the War of Independence. He did not recognize the authority of either Shahu or Tarabai, he led a freebooter's life. He was defeated and killed in a battle by Balaji in 1714. Shripat Rao pratinidhi, son of

⁸ *Brahmendra Swami Charita*, 119 SPD, III, 129 XVII, 12 XXX, 222. *Satara Historical Records*, II, 268.

⁹ SPD. VII, 4.

Parashram Rao pratinidhi, showed great bravery in this campaign. As a result Parashram Rao pratinidhi was released from prison into which he had been put for his disloyalty. He now sided with Shahu.

Besides Krishna Rao Khatavkar, there were other sardars like Damaji Thorat in Supa, Shahji Nimbalkar in Phaltan, Udaji Chavan in Miraj, Khem Sawant in south Konkan and Kanhoji Angria in north Konkan who did not recognize Shahu's authority, and some of them created terror and trouble in the country. Kanhoji Angria, the admiral of the Maratha fleet on the Konkan coast, proved a powerful enemy. He was a great soldier and a good sailor and had in 1711 joined Tarabai's party. He took Kalyan and seized two forts of Rajmachi and Lohgad near the Bhorghat in 1713. Shahu sent the peshwa, Bahiropan Pingle, against him. He was defeated and captured by Kanhoji and thrown into prison. There was no other minister or general except Balaji who was considered competent to meet this grave danger. Shahu, therefore, sent Balaji with a strong force against Kanhoji.

Balaji tried the method of negotiation. He had known Kanhoji before. He arranged a meeting with him and persuaded him to accept Shahu as the lawful ruler of the Maratha state. They entered into an agreement in February 1714 by which Kanhoji became a loyal sardar of Shahu. He was confirmed as the admiral (*sarkhel*) of the Maratha fleet. He agreed to give up the forts which he had taken. All the forts below the Ghats were given to Kanhoji and those above the Ghats returned to Shahu. Bahiropan Pingle was released. Balaji agreed to help Kanhoji in his campaigns against the Sidis, the Portuguese, and the English who were the real enemies of the Maratha state. As a result of reconciliation with Angria Shahu became secure from foreign enemies on the western side.¹⁰ Thus Balaji achieved a great diplomatic and political triumph and enormously strengthened the power and prestige of the Maratha state.

Before Balaji undertook this campaign he was able to persuade Shahu to confer upon him the high office of the peshwa which had practically been vacated by the imprisonment of Bahiropan Pingle, its hereditary holder. The appointment was made by Shahu's letter dated 16 November 1713, and a jagir of five *mahals* was granted. Balaji acquired the chief minister's position by dint of his real merit; his promotion was a well-deserved reward for his loyal and exceptional services to Shahu in the consolidation and stabilisation of the Maratha state. No one could then anticipate the far-

¹⁰ Rajwade IV, *Peshwa Bakhar Dhikoo, Anceles of Kolaba, Sardesai, Balaji Vishwanath*, 89-95.

reaching significance of this appointment in the history of the Marathas as also of India as a whole.

The Sidis of Janjira had proved great opponents of Shivaji and his policy in the Konkan. They continued to be a persistent source of trouble and mischief to the Maratha state. They worked on behalf of the Mughals. They got help from the Portuguese and the English in their struggles against the Marathas. They raided and ravaged the Maratha country and committed atrocities on the people. Kanhoji was fighting against them. They were defeated and a treaty was made on 30 January 1715.¹¹ It was due to Balaji that peace was made between Kanhoji and the Sidis. They discontinued their raids and ravages and allowed half the revenue of certain villages to be realised by Shahu's officers.

Balaji's conciliatory policy not only won over Kanhoji Angria but also Parashram Rao pratinidhi, an old and influential minister. He and his son became very loyal to Shahu, and they rendered good services and advice on important occasions. It was the old pratinidhi who recommended the appointment of Balaji to the premiership in 1713.

BALAJI AND MUGHAL GOVERNMENT

In spite of the recognition of Shahu's authority over the Maratha country by the emperor and his ministers, Mughal governors like Daud Khan Panni (1708-12) and Nizam-ul-mulk (1713-15), as also subordinate officers who had been holding posts and places in the Maratha country from the time of Aurangzib, were not willing to recognize his claims or rights. Nor were they prepared to leave the Maratha territory which was still in their possession, such as the Poona-Junnar area, and some places and forts in the Konkan and Maval areas. Shahu had to drive away these Mughal officers from his territory. Balaji helped him to do this from 1708 onwards. This task took several years; it was accomplished finally in 1719.

The most significant step taken by Balaji was the settlement of permanent relations of the Maratha state with the Mughal empire defining their respective rights, claims and spheres of influence. The first two provisional understandings, one with Azam Shah in May 1707 when he released Shahu, and the other with Bahadur Shah in 1709, were not definitely recorded in written documents duly exchanged. When Bahadur Shah died in 1712, Shahu was not able to claim the sole sovereignty of the Maratha state and was not able to get the *farmans* of settlement promised by Bahadur Shah. After

¹¹ *Shahu Maharaj Charitra*, 40, Province 11, 23-25.

Daud Khan Panni left in 1713 the Nizam-ul-mulk became the Mughal governor of the Deccan. He was not in favour of recognizing Maratha rights and entering into a permanent agreement with them. In fact, he was the greatest opponent of the Maratha aims in the Deccan. During his viceroyalty of the Deccan from 1713 to 1715 no progress in the direction of settlement was made, on the contrary, he fomented dissensions amongst the Marathas, won over Maratha sardars, and refused to recognize the rights claimed by Shahu on the basis of promises of Bahadur Shah. From 1709, however, Shahu had started to realise his dues and to assert his rights in accordance with those promises, though imperial *farmans* had not been formally issued in his favour.¹²

Although Farrukh-siyar was reluctant to recognize the Maratha claims, the situation turned in Shahu's favour when Savyid Husain Ali Khan became the viceroy of the Deccan in 1715. He also wanted to crush the Marathas; but they had already overcome their internal troubles to a large extent and become fairly strong. In 1716 Husain Ali's forces were severely defeated by the Marathas under Khande Rao Dabhade who was collecting *chauth* from Gujarat and Khandesh on behalf of Shahu. By that time Farrukh-sivar had become anxious to get rid of the Savyid brothers. So he encouraged the Marathas to obstruct and destroy Husain Ali. But Husain Ali, being unable to crush the Marathas changed his policy towards them. He decided to open negotiations to win their friendship and help and enter into an alliance with them. He sent one Shankarji Mallu an able Maratha diplomat to Shahu. The negotiations were carried on in the name of the emperor. This was an excellent opportunity for the Maratha king to establish direct contacts with the imperial government. Balaji negotiated on behalf of Shahu. The result was that Husain Ali Khan confirmed to Shahu his right of *swarajya*, *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* in February 1718. Accordingly Shahu obtained the recognition of (1) his sovereign rights in *swarajya* (Shivaji's old territory) with all sorts (2) his rights of *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* in the six subahs of the Deccan, as also in Mysore, Trichinopoly and Tanjore, and (3) the annexation of the recent Maratha conquests in Gondwana, Berar, Khandesh, Hyderabad and Karnatak. The fortresses of Shivneri and Trimbak were to be restored to the Marathas, and Shahu's mother and family were to be allowed to return to the Deccan. Shahu on his side agreed to pay 10 lakhs of rupees in return for *swarajya*, to maintain a body of 15,000 soldiers in order to help the Mughals in return for *chauth* and to undertake

12 Elliot and Dawson, VII, 408, 409, 465, 466.

to protect the country from robbery and depredation in return for *sardeshmukhi*.¹³

Husain Ali's agreement was provisional till the emperor's assent was obtained. Farrukh-siyar refused to recognize it. But Shahu began to assert and realize his rights from August 1718 in accordance with the new arrangement. The result was very far-reaching. Through Balaji's clever diplomacy Shahu was able to secure that recognized legal status which he had been aiming at since his release. His power was permanently established in his own country. His influence with the Mughals and his prestige in the eyes of his people were enormously enhanced. The troubles at home decreased, and a new field was opened to the Marathas to play a decisive role in the tangled politics of the Mughal empire. The recognition of the rights of *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* helped their military movements and facilitated conquest in several Mughal provinces. This was a great diplomatic and political revolution in the balance of power of that period. Shahu now had his army further increased and strengthened.

This agreement did not serve the Maratha interest alone, it proved of very great advantage to Husain Ali in his difficulties with the emperor. At Delhi his brother Abdullah Khan needed his help as the emperor wanted to get rid of him. Husain Ali was asked to return to the capital. He started, accompanied by about 16,000 Maratha troops under the command of Khande Rao Dabhade, the *senapati* of the Marathas. Balaji also accompanied the Maratha army in order to get the agreement finally and formally confirmed by the emperor.¹⁴ Along with other sardars Baji Rao, Balaji's son, also accompanied the army. The Marathas were to get as expenses 50,000 rupees per day.

The emperor did not want Husain Ali and the Marathas to come to Delhi, nor did he want to ratify the agreement. Husain Ali, however, reached Delhi along with the Maratha army in February 1719. The quarrel between the emperor and the Savvid brothers was reaching its climax. On 28 February the Maratha troops were attacked unawares by the soldiers of some anti-Savvid nobles and by the city rabble. They lost about 1,500 men. The Savvids, knowing the emperor's designs, deposed him on the same day. A prince of the imperial family, Rafi-ud-darjat, was raised to the throne. The deposed emperor was blinded and then put to death on 28 April 1719.

The new emperor, a puppet in the hands of the Savvid brothers,

¹³ SPD, VII, 28; X, 1. Rajwade, III, 99-100. *Proceedings of Indian Historical Records Commission*, 1940, 204-15. Elliot and Dawson, VII, pp. 487-88.

¹⁴ SPD, XXX, 244-65.

accepted the settlement with the Marathas. Two documents concerning it were issued.¹⁵ One, dated 3 March 1719, granted the right of *chauth*. The other, dated 15 March 1719, recognized the right of *sardeshmukhi*. There was a third deed also, concerning the *swarajya*, but its date is not known. These three *farmans* confirmed the promises made to the Marathas by Husain Ali.¹⁶ The mother and family of Shahu, along with Madan Singhi, Sambhaji's son by a concubine, were also released. Balaji seems to have immediately left Delhi on 20 March 1719, and reached Satara on 4 July. The documents which he brought from Delhi have been described as 'the Magna Carta of the Maratha dominion'.

For Balaji the expedition to Delhi was fruitful in many respects. While returning he passed through Rajputana. He found the Rajputs divided, possessing no unity of aim or action. They were wavering in their loyalty to and support of the Mughals. In spite of the agreement of the rulers of Jaipur, Jodhpur and Udaipur in 1710 not to give their daughters in marriage to the Mughals nor to help the Mughal emperor but to fight for their own independence against the Mughals, they did not co-operate and implement these arrangements. Hence the Rajputs did not become a real danger to the Mughals. They sided with or opposed them only temporarily and individually. Disunity and weakness marked the political scene in Rajputana. Balaji saw this clearly.

He also noticed in Delhi the character of the Mughal emperors and their nobles, their factions, parties and rivalries, the state of their armies and finances. The power of the emperor had declined, that of ministers and nobles had increased, but there was no unity among them. Capable ministers were only looking after their own interest and seeking to increase their personal power; some were even aiming at virtual independence. There was hardly any influential noble of public position who was whole-heartedly loyal to the cause of the emperor and anxious to preserve the integrity of the empire. Participation in Delhi or Deccan politics was motivated by purposes opposed to the imperial interest. The emperors and heirs to the throne had not that strength of character, energy, and commanding personality which could hold the reins of the empire united in one hand. They rose and fell at the pleasure of powerful nobles. Deprived of active imperial guidance and control, Delhi politics had neither defensive strength nor aggressive might. The Marathas, however, had been rising in political prestige and power both in the Deccan and in the north. Their success in the long and hard-fought War of Independence;

¹⁵ Mawji and Parashis, *Treaties, Engagements, and Sanads*, No. 1.

¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 1-9. Rajwade, III, 99-100; VIII, 78.

Shahu's success in the civil war with Rajaram's widows and sons, which frustrated the Mughal plan of weakening and ruining the Marathas; the successful raids and conquests of Maratha sardars and soldiers in Karnatak, Aurangabad, Khandesh, Berar, Gondwana, Gujarat and Malwa, and the later creation of permanent spheres of Maratha influence in Rajputana and Bundelkhand; the recognition of their rights of *swarajya*, *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* in various parts of India; the Maratha-Mughal alliance for military co-operation: these startling political developments during the last decade of the seventeenth and the first two decades of the eighteenth century tended to shift the centre of power from Delhi to Maharashtra. While returning from north India Balaji had saved about 32 lakhs of rupees from the amount he had received from Husain Ali for the expenses of the Maratha army. For his great services to the state Shahu granted Balaji the *sardeshmukhi* of five *mahals*.

After the settlement with Kanhoji Angria and the fall of Tarabai in 1714 Shahu decided to put down local free-booters and rebels and to confiscate their usurpations. In 1716 Shahu sent Balaji against Damaji Thorat who cleverly lured him by a false oath into his fort under the pretext of submission and settlement and then imprisoned him. As Damaji could not be put down at the time, Shahu had to secure Balaji's release by payment of ransom. Udaji Chavan, another disloyal sardar, conspired against Shahu's authority along with Chandrasen Jadhav. He used to ravage the country and realize *chauth* on his own account. In 1717 Shahu had to take action against his rebellious and treacherous conduct. Damaji encouraged by previous success, captured by deceit the minor sachiva Naro Shankar (1717), a boy of nine years. He had to be ransomed like Balaji. Thorat tried to strengthen himself by negotiating with Husain Ali. But after Shahu's settlement with Husain Ali in February 1718, Balaji destroyed his Hingagaon fortress and captured and imprisoned him in the Purandhar fort. Another source of trouble was a Mughal officer named Paddullah Khan stationed at Karhad. He did not leave the place in spite of Husain Ali's orders. In 1718, before Balaji left for Delhi, Shahu along with Balaji marched against him, captured Karhad and Islampur, and drove him away. Sambhaji of Kolhapur who was helping the Thorat brothers, was severely defeated at Vadgaon by Balaji before he left for Delhi in November 1718. As already stated, Balaji's success in Delhi increased the power and prestige of Shahu; it facilitated restoration of his authority in his territory. Balaji drove away finally the Mughal officers from Poona territory. In August 1719 he took the Kalvan-Bhiwandi area. Then in November 1719 Shahu and Balaji marched against Sambhaji and the Thorats who were again

creating troubles. They were defeated in the beginning of 1720 and definitely put down.

BALAJI'S ACHIEVEMENTS

Balaji died in April 1720. He had completed his task. He was brave and loyal, resourceful and wise. With very old sardars and ministers wavering in their loyalty or even actively helping the enemies, he was able to settle the Maratha-Mughal relations, to win over Kanhoji Angria, to defeat not only Tarabai and her associates but also Sambhaji and his supporters, to drive away troublesome Mughal officers, to defeat the intrigues of Daud Khan Panni and the Nizam-ul-mulk and the forces of Husain Ali, to reduce rebellious local chiefs and families, and to organize the Maratha administration, army and finance on new lines, suitable to the needs of the time. This is no mean record of achievement in the fields of statesmanship and administration. In the difficult task of putting the Maratha state on a firm footing he was able—through tact and good judgment—to enlist the co-operation of prominent sardars and influential families, such as Khande Rao Dabhade, Parsoji and Kanhop Bhonsle, Shankarji Malhar, the Purandares and the Bokils. Thus the new regime was placed on solid foundations. the era of internal strife was over.

Shahu, no doubt, lacked some of the essential qualities of kingship in that age of adventure and aggression, rapid decision and political assertion. By character and temperament he was not the ruler best suited to his epoch. He was deficient in strength of will which is the primary qualification needed in a ruler, particularly when his task is to build up a strong state in times of trouble. His people had qualities of daring and leadership; they had gifts and talents needed for success in war and peace. There was enough human material for a new class of soldiers and administrators who could loyally and efficiently serve under the royal banner for the creation and consolidation of a strong, expanding, centralised state. But Shahu lacked the genius to utilise this material. He did not possess his predecessors' spirit of independence and resistance to the Mughal empire. He had in a way bound himself to preserve it and to help the Mughal emperor. He accepted the Rajput attitude in polities. It was only because the Mughal governors and officers were conspiring against and attacking the Marathas and not recognizing their legitimate rights that Shahu had to agree with or connive at the aggressive policy of his sardars and *saranjamdars*. The continuous conflict and contact between the Marathas and the Mughals were due to the undefined political relations and claims in various parts of the country and to the absence

of a well-adjusted and organized machinery to harmonize those relations and to reconcile those claims.

MARATHA ADMINISTRATION

The office of the peshwa or pant pradhan was created by Shivaji. He was the chief minister. But after the creation of the office of pratnidhi in the time of Rajaram the peshwa's office was considered next in importance to it. Thus Shahu had nine ministers including the pratnidhi. But this system of administration differed basically from that created by Shivaji. It had radically changed under the stress of the War of Independence. It had become feudal as also hereditary. In order to attract powerful and able men to the king's standard and to retain their services and loyalty the jagir system, modelled on the assignment of land in the Mughal territories, was introduced. 'Conquer and rule' was the keynote of the new politics of the Marathas. Hence arose the new feudal hierarchy of hereditary officers and jagirdars who became not only revenue collectors and military officers but also civil administrators of the newly occupied territories.

To some capable and ambitious army leaders and officers were assigned spheres of influence which they were expected to bring under their control by armed strength without direct assistance from the king's government. Thus Malwa was assigned to Nemaji Sindhia, Gujarat and Baglan to the Dabhades, Khandesh and Balaghat to the peshwa, Berar and Gondwana to the Bhonsles, the Konkan to the Angrias, Karnatak to Fateh Singh Bhonsle, Gangawadi and Aurangabad to the Nimbalkars, and Hyderabad, Bidar and the territory between the rivers Nira and Warna to the pratnidhi. These Maratha sardars fought the Mughal commanders and officers continuously in pursuance of their claims and established their hold on those territories. Their conquests led to the strengthening of the Maratha military feudalism. It got rooted in the administration of the country. Neither the king himself nor the new peshwa intended or was strong enough to unsettle it. Shahu and Balaji could not show a firm hand when their own position was precarious. When they were finally established they could not undo what they had agreed to or acquiesced in. Both relied primarily on diplomacy and peaceful methods to tide over crises and difficult situations. They resorted to extreme methods only as a last resort. Their policy was not strong enough to settle any disputed issue finally and decisively. The system of *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* was also largely responsible for the perpetuation of the jagir system.

The main pillars of the administration of the Maratha state were

(1) the chhatrapati, (2) the ministers in the *swarajya* territory, (3) the sardars in newly conquered territories, including the spheres of influence and the areas of revenue collection, and (4) the local units. The ruler, the ministers and the sardars were all jagir-holders, possessing military, political and civil powers. Such was the organization of the new Maratha *mandala* or confederacy under Shahu. The new Maratha state was neither centralized nor unitary; it was a decentralized state, the bond and relations between the monarch and the feudatories being loose and weak in character. Its military power and financial organization were not integrated and unified. The power came from above in theory, but flowed from below in practice. Hence its administrative organization and its foreign policy had no co-ordinated strength. Both power and revenue were shared between the ruler, ministers and army leaders. They were neither derived nor held or collected from one central authority. There was no real control, supervision or co-ordination from the centre. This system tended to make the centre weaker and weaker, and to shift the power and resources of the state to the feudatory more and more.

In *swarajya* much of the old political organization and most of its institutions were maintained, although the supreme authority of government was in the hands of Shahu and his peshwa who ruled directly in this territory. The sardars followed more or less the same system and policy in their own fiefs or province. The collection of revenue was done by the sardars or jagirdars. It was divided as follows: (1) The whole of the *sardeshmukhi* (one-tenth of the revenue) belonged to the ruler; (2) the *swarajya* revenue and the *chauth* (one-fourth of the revenue), were divided in two portions, 25 per cent being appropriated by the king as *rajbati* and 75 per cent being marked as *mokasa*. Of the *mokasa* 6 per cent (*sahotra*) and 3 per cent (*nadgauda*) remained at the disposal of the king, to be given to whomsoever he wished. *Sahotra* was given to the sachiva, and *nadgauda* was distributed as the king liked. The remainder of the *mokasa* (66 per cent) was retained by and distributed among the sardars holding different territories. They were expected not to encroach on one another's sphere or field of operation. They maintained the local army, collected the revenue and administered the territory directly. Thus outside the *swarajya* territory there was no direct rule of the king and his ministers. There the sardars were the primary rulers. Not unnaturally their policies were marked by a spirit of independence which often degenerated into selfish exclusiveness and dangerous rivalry.

There was also a minor set of officials at the centre, such as the chitnis for correspondence, the sadnis for accounts, the potnis for

treasury, and others, who looked after the details of administration. They appointed similar officers or *darakhdars* for each sardar and supervised their work. Some of the ministers and sardars had to make monthly payments for maintenance of royal establishments. The sachiv paid for the maintenance of royal stables, the pratnidhi for royal stores, and the peshwa for royal palaces and buildings. It was the duty of the officer called rajadnya to supervise these collections and contributions from feudatories.

In spite of considerable powers and opportunities for independent action, the sardars had well defined duties which kept them close to the central structure. They were not allowed to make war and peace without the sanction of the central authority. They were expected to keep loyal to the king, to send regularly the fixed amount of revenue payable to him, to keep proper accounts and records, to keep the army in good order, to inform the central government about its strength, and to maintain the *inams* given to temples and other bodies and persons in the territories under their charge.¹⁷

SUCCESSION OF BAJI RAO

Baji Rao, Balaji Vishwanath's eldest son, was born on 18 August 1700; Chimnaji Appa was about five years younger. Both these brothers created a revolution in contemporary politics by their military achievements and political foresight. The keynote of their politics was, 'advance or perish'. They got their early training in war and politics in the company and movements of their father. Baji Rao used to accompany him in his expeditions from 1710.¹⁸ He was with him in Delhi in 1718-19.¹⁹ He took an active part in warfare during 1719-20. He showed a precocious ability in military matters and in the understanding of political problems. Shahu recognized this fact and conferred on him the office of the peshwa on 17 April 1720.²⁰ Along with Baji Rao's personal merit, Balaji's unexampled devotion and services counted in the choice. Baji Rao had already been made a sardar on 6 October 1718 at the time of his going to Delhi.

The Maratha state at the time had to face foes within and without. In the north and the east Baji Rao, as the principal minister, had to ward off the aggression of governors and officers of Mughal

17 Ranade, *Introduction to Peshwas' Diaries*. Ramchandra Pant Amatya, *Ajnaputra Sardesai, Balaji Vishwanath*, 153-80. S. N. Sen, *Administrative System of the Marathas*.

18 *Shahu Bakhar*, 28.

19 SPD, XXX, 308, 309. *Shahu Razkird*, 108.

20 Rajwade, IV, *Peshwa Bakhar, Kavyetihasa Sampraha*, No. 496. *Shahu Maharaj Charitra*.

provinces. In the west he had to check the encroachments of the Sidis, the Portuguese and the English. In the south he had to lead expeditions against Mughal usurpations and local rebellions. Within the *swarajya* he had to put down conspiracies and rebellions. Finally, he had to settle the quarrels with Sambhaji of Kolhapur, the Dabhades of Gujarat, the Angrias of the Konkan, and the Bhonsles of Berar.

The most important problem, however, was the settlement of relations with the Mughal empire. Muhammad Shah, who succeeded as emperor in September 1719, confirmed the *farmans* granted to the Marathas.²¹ But at that time there were two parties in the imperial court, one pro-Maratha and the other anti-Maratha. The Sayyids favoured the Marathas; the Turanis opposed their claims. The struggle for power between these two parties continued. After Husain Ali's departure from the Deccan in 1718 the Nizam-ul-mulk defeated his deputies Dilawar Ali and Alam Ali—the latter being supported by a large Maratha contingent—and secured control over the southern subahs. Husain Ali who started to punish the Nizam-ul-mulk was killed treacherously by the Turani party on 8 October 1720 at Toda Bhim, 60 miles east of Jaipur. His brother Abdullah Khan was defeated at Hasanpur on 14 November 1720, and captured. Thus the Turani party came to power.²² One of its leaders, the Nizam-ul-mulk, had already become the viceroy of the Deccan from August 1720. The emperor, however, called him from the south and made him imperial wazir in February 1722. During his absence in the north his deputy, Mubariz Khan, looked after the affairs of his Deccan viceroyalty. As an agent of the Mughal empire, and with his personal interest fixed in the Deccan, the Nizam-ul-mulk became a powerful and persistent enemy of the Maratha state.

Baji Rao's twenty years' regime may be divided into four periods, each of five years' duration. In the first quinquennium he watched the moves and policy of the Nizam and settled his own policy and field of action. He also studied the interests and aims of the leading men and the nature of affairs at home and laid down his own line of action in relation to them.

BAJI RAO'S FIRST QUINQUENNIUM : RELATIONS WITH NIZAM-UL-MULK

The Marathas were pro-Sayyid, but after the fall of the Sayyids, they gave up the lost cause. The Nizam, though anti-Maratha at heart,

²¹ *Proceedings of Indian Historical Records Commission*, 1940, 204-15. Elliot and Dowson, VII, 488-517. Irvine, *Later Mughals*, II, 40-49.

²² Elliot and Dowson, VII, 488-89.

was anxious for Maratha help against his enemies in Delhi. He met Baji Rao at Chikhalthan in Khandesh on 4 January 1721 with the object of entering into some sort of understanding with him.²³ It was also expedient for the Marathas to come to a settlement with the *de facto* ruler of the Mughal subahs in the Deccan. The Nizam during his negotiations with the Marathas recognized their rights and issued orders concerning them, one on 22 November 1720, and the other on 4 January 1721. They had already been confirmed by the emperor.²⁴

The immediate problem for Baji Rao on succeeding his father was to expel the Mughal officers who were still holding on in some parts of Maratha territory. On 11 October 1720 a severe engagement took place with them at Baramati and they were driven out. The work of expulsion of the Mughals from other parts of Maratha territory continued for some years.²⁵ This work was entrusted to the pratmidhi Sripat Rao in 1720-21. His campaign against them is known as the Bankapur campaign. But the really important problem was how to protect the Maratha territories against the intrigues of the Nizam-ul-mulk who controlled the Mughal subahs in the Deccan from August 1720. Urged by his deputy, Mubariz Khan, to check the Maratha progress in Karnatak, he entered into a league with Chandrasen Jadhav, set Sambhaji against Shahu, and then informed Shahu that he was not prepared to recognize his rights to *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi*. As Sambhaji claimed the same right, they should settle their quarrel and then he would grant the dues payable to the Marathas. As the Nizam prevented the Maratha officers from collecting the revenues Shahu had to realize them by force. Haibatrao Nimbalkar defeated Chandrasen Jadhav and others who were fighting on behalf of the Nizam on the banks of the Godavari on 15 December 1720.

Thus Baji Rao's main task was to frustrate the secret designs of the Nizam against the integrity of the Maratha state and its recognized rights. He soon understood the double policy of the Nizam and laid down his own policy before Shahu in the royal council in 1721. Baji Rao is reported to have advocated the following plan in a speech: "The Mughal empire is lying prostrate, it is nearing its end, it is torn by factions and internecine feuds, the emperor desires to bolster up his throne with our support. You speak of the Nizam breaking the agreement and commencing hostilities. But he is of no account... You now occupy the throne and are assisted by able councillors. Our aid is sought by the Mughals and by its means emperors are made and un-

²³ SPD, X, 4-7, II; XXX, 309 (p. 288).

²⁴ *Proceedings of Indian Historical Records Commission*, 1940, 207-15.

²⁵ SPD, XXX, 28, 310, 324.

made. Is not this the moment when we should attempt to seize the supreme political power? I undertake to hold the Nizam in check as well as effect a northward drive... The great Shivaji's dream of the conquest of Hindustan has remained unfulfilled to this date. Balaji Pant has prepared the ground, establishing friendly relations with the Hindu rajas. Now is our time to drive away the strangers from the country of the Hindus and to acquire immortal renown. Let us strike at the trunk of the withering tree, and the branches will fall of themselves. By directing our efforts to Hindustan, the Maratha flag shall fly from the Krishna to Attock." Shahu replied, "You shall plant it beyond the Himalayas. You are indeed a noble son of a noble father."²⁶ No doubt Shahu agreed generally with Baji Rao's aggressive and warlike policy; but it was to be followed when peaceful negotiations had failed.

The first meeting with the Nizam on 4 January 1721 at Chikhalthan did not result in a real change in the Nizam's secret designs. He was openly temporising but secretly conspiring. The Mughal officers in parts of the Maratha kingdom were resisting the attempts of the Marathas to re-occupy their territory. The Nizam and Mubariz Khan were obstructing the establishment of the Maratha authority in Karnatak and extending their own power in that region. They were supporting and inciting Shahu's enemies and rebels within the state to rise against him. Baji Rao, finding negotiations proving fruitless, decided to organize and use force. On 13 March 1721 he attacked Surat.

A few months later—in February 1722—the Nizam became the emperor's chief minister. From his point of vantage he tried to establish imperial authority and his personal dominance in the various provinces. Naturally he was not prepared to recognize Maratha rights. In November 1722 Baji Rao left for Malwa. The provinces of Malwa and Gujarat were assigned by Shahu as half *mokasa* to the peshwa as his field of operation after the imperial grant of *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi*. The demand for these revenues was turned down by the emperor on the advice of the Nizam. Baji Rao decided to realize his dues by force. In order to carry on this task he appointed Udaji Pawar to take charge of Malwa on 3 December 1722 by the grant of a half-share of his own *mokasa*. Udaji Pawar did this work efficiently by establishing Maratha outposts in Malwa. Kanthaji Kadamb and Pilaji Gaikwad were engaged in similar work in Gujarat on behalf of the Dabhades. The Nizam was opposed to such expansion of Maratha power; but being out of good grace of the court party at that time he adopted a conciliatory attitude towards the Marathas. He met Baji Rao at Badaksha

near Zabua in Malwa on 13 February 1723.²⁷ Nothing definite was settled. The Nizam wanted to gain time and was only complying with the requirements of the occasion. He wanted to establish his independence in the Deccan and, with that end in view, wanted the help of the Marathas in his contest against the court party. Baji Rao, on the other hand, wanted to expel all Mughal officers from Maharashtra and Karnatak and to establish Maratha dominance in Malwa and Gujarat. He defeated Dost Muhammad of Bhopal in April 1723.

A few months later the Nizam's differences with the emperor and the court party reached the climax. The latter were suspicious about his aims and disliked his selfish intrigues. He was arrogant and unpopular. On his part he was disgusted with the worthlessness and intrigues of the courtiers. He gave up the post of chief minister in December 1723 and left for the Deccan in February 1724, without the emperor's permission, on the pretext of driving out the Marathas from Malwa and Gujarat.²⁸ He reached Ujjain in Malwa. Baji Rao had already marched to the north on 27 January 1724 to watch the movements of the Nizam and to extend his authority in Malwa. The emperor, who did not approve of the Nizam's aims and methods, appointed Mubariz Khan as governor of the Deccan and ordered him to resist the Nizam. He also wrote to Shahu to assist Mubariz Khan in this task. Baji Rao fought a battle with the Mughals at Lamokani in Khandesh on 14 March 1727, and then proceeded to Malwa.²⁹ The Marathas were being welcomed by some Rajput chiefs, nobles and landholders. Sawai Jai Singh of Amber seemed to be favourable to their entrance into the province. It was being overrun by Udaji Pawar, and from 1724 also by Ranoji Sindhia and Malhar Rao Holkar. They were collecting *chauth* by force as the peshwa's representatives.

In his hour of peril the Nizam also sought the help of the Marathas. He and Baji Rao met at Nalchha near Dhar in Malwa on 18 May 1724.³⁰ As Mubariz Khan had not approached him Baji Rao agreed to help the Nizam. Shahu in reply to the emperor's request for help had made a demand for the confirmation of his rights, the abolition of tribute, and the conferment of the governorship of the Deccan on the person whom he ('Shahu') would approve. The emperor rejected these demands. Therefore the Marathas adopted a pro-Nizam policy at the time. The Nizam on 23 June 1724 issued formal documents agreeing only to the old Maratha demands.³¹ The Nizam's

²⁷ SPD, X, 25.

²⁸ Elliot and Dowson, VII, 523-25. Irving, *Latter Mughals*, II, 141.

²⁹ SPD, XXX, 311 (p. 269).

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ *Proceedings of Indian Historical Records Commission*, 1940, 203-15.

contest with Mubariz Khan followed. He came out successful; Mubariz Khan was defeated and killed in the battle of Shakarkheda in Berar on 1 October 1724.³² Whether the Marathas played any actual part in this battle is not clear; they probably waited to make a bargain with the victor. There is no doubt, however, that this battle marked the virtual establishment of the Nizam's independent power in the Deccan. He made Hyderabad his capital on 16 January 1725. He was recognized as the governor of the Deccan on 20 June 1725 by the emperor, but was deprived of the chief ministership of the empire as also of the governorship of Malwa and Gujarat.

Baji Rao and the Nizam had another meeting at Aurangabad, but no finality in political relations was reached. The peace could not and did not last long. The Nizam did not like the presence of Maratha revenue-collectors in his provinces. A number of disloyal Maratha sardars and claimants approached him for help against Shahi.

• PALKHED AND MUNGI SHEOGAON

The second quinquennium of Baji Rao's regime, from 1726 to 1730, is important in the context of his relations with the Nizam. This was the period of the Karnatak campaigns and the Maratha advance in Malwa, Bundelkhand and Gujarat. Sambhaji's affairs were also settled.

The region known as Karnatak consisted of two parts: Balaghat (high land) and Painghat (low land). Some portions of these had been conquered by the sultans of Bijapur and Golconda, and others by Shivaji and Vyankoji; the remaining areas remained under local Hindu rulers. Aurangzib had absorbed all these portions in the empire when he destroyed all the Deccan kingdoms. But the Marathas regained their possession after his death. The Ghorpades established Maratha authority in Karnatak with their headquarters at Gutti. Successive Mughal governors and officers tried to extend and consolidate Mughal authority in Karnatak. Saadatullah Khan, Aurangzib's general, established his headquarters at Areot which lay between Balaghat and Painghat. Subsequently Areot became the capital of his successors, the nawabs of Karnatak. The Marathas had secured the right of collecting *chauth* from all these parts. The Nizam and his officers were not prepared to allow it. Hence arose the Karnatak campaigns.³³ Local Hindu chiefs also sought Maratha help against Mughal encroachments. Saadatullah Khan had harassed the Tanjore Maratha rulers.

³² SPD, XXX, 33, 34, 311. Elliot and Dowson, VII, 526 *Haqiqat-ul-'alam*, 196-97.

³³ *Purandare Daftari*, I, 77. Rajwade, VI, 22.

The first campaign,³⁴ or the campaign of Chitaldrug, took place from November 1725 to May 1726. Shahu sent Baji Rao and Pilaji Jadhav to the Nizam to ask for his co-operation which was, however, refused. Baji Rao joined the campaign which was under the command of Fateh Singh Bhonsle who was associated with other important commanders. The ruler of Sunda surrendered and agreed to pay tribute in return for protection. As soon as the Marathas returned, the Nizam's officers started attacking the Hindu principalities in that area. The Nizam himself went as far as Adoni in 1726 and sent troops. When Shahu heard the complaints of the Hindu rulers he sent another expedition. The second campaign, or the campaign of Srirangapattan,³⁵ covered the period from November 1726 to April 1727. Baji Rao joined this expedition and marched as far as Srirangapattan, securing obedience of local chiefs and collecting *chauth*. But the Maratha armies suffered in this campaign owing to scarcity of water, intense heat and epidemic of cholera. The campaign was not very successful. Baji Rao made a treaty of peace with Saadatullah which lasted till 1742. The Marathas established their rights of *chauth* in western and central Karnatak only which strengthened the authority of the Ghorpades of Gutti. Their claims in eastern Karnatak remained unsettled.³⁶

While the second Karnatak campaign was going on and Baji Rao was engaged there, the Nizam allied himself with the malcontents of Maharashtra, such as Sambhaji of Kolhapur, Chandrasen Jadhav and other sardars who were plotting against Shahu.³⁷ He instigated a civil war among the Marathas to gain his own ends. Shahu in order to conciliate Sambhaji had offered him a draft agreement in December 1725 which proposed that they should unite against the Mughals and share the conquests half and half.³⁸ But Sambhaji had refused to accept these terms; he wanted the throne itself. When Baji Rao was engaged in the Karnatak campaign, Chandrasen Jadhav and his associates made an unsuccessful surprise attack on Shahu's territory. In order to punish them Shahu recalled Baji Rao from Karnatak. Udaji Pawar, Bande and Pilaji Gaikwad were summoned from the north. The party of the pratinidhi was not in favour of active meas-

³⁴ *Shahu Roznishi*, 27. *Rajwade*, VI, 22.

³⁵ *Shahu Roznishi*, 19, 22, 23, 25. *Balaji Baji Rao Roznishi*, 226-28.

³⁶ Rajwade, XXXVII, 9, 10; VI, 109. *Brahmendra Swami Charitra*, Appendix 32. Wilks, *History of Mysore*, I, 141.

³⁷ Rajwade, III, 559.

³⁸ *Shahu Roznishi*, 172, 173. *Kavyesithasa Samgraha Patre Yaddi*, 18. *Rajwade*, VIII, 96, 99.

ures against the Nizam; it wanted to settle differences amicably. The Nizam wanted his capital Hyderabad to be exempt from *chauth* in lieu of some annual revenue on assigned land or a stipulated amount in cash to be paid from the treasury. He also proposed that Shahu's officers should not enter his territory for realising the *chauth*. In return he was prepared to give some fixed amount and a portion of territory in Balaghat to Shahu and a jagir to the pratinidhi. The pratinidhi accepted these terms. The Nizam also proposed to arbitrate between Shahu and Sambhaji in regard to their rival claims. Baji Rao was opposed to the acceptance of any of these proposals. The Nizam, however, got Hyderabad exempted from *chauth* and *sardesh-mukhi* in exchange for other territory on the mediation of the pratinidhi. He continued to refuse payment of *chauth* to the Marathas. Baji Rao, therefore, started to harass the Nizam's territory on 27 August 1727.³⁹ Shahu sent letters on 13 October to his sardars to join Baji Rao. Sambhaji went over to the Nizam. The Nizam had also prepared secretly for a struggle, but he had kept his plans and moves quite secret. In a letter to Sawai Jai Singh in 1727 he wrote that he had invited and brought Sambhaji to his side, that by helping him he was trying to oust Shahu from his throne, that Sultanji Nimbalkar had come over to him, and that other sardars were likely to join him and thus Shahu would be weakened.⁴⁰

Baji Rao was weak and the Nizam was strong in artillery. Hence Baji Rao had to depend on technical manoeuvres and mobile troops for his success, thus neutralizing the power of the Nizam's artillery. Two theatres of war developed, one in the Maratha kingdom itself in the south and west, the other in the Nizam's territory in the north and east. Chinnaji was put in charge of the first and Baji Rao personally took charge of the second. There was fighting in both areas. It started first in the Poona area in the rainy season (July-October) of 1727. Here Iwaz Khan, Chandrasen Jadhav, the Thorats and others were causing a lot of havoc. Udaji Pawar opposed and checked them successfully in August 1727. Chandrasen Jadhav was defeated by Fateh Singh Bhonsle and Raghuji Bhonsle.⁴¹

Meanwhile Baji Rao had left for the second theatre of war on 7 July 1727. He started his campaign on 27 August. The Nizam asked for Sawai Jai Singh's help against Shahu. Baji Rao created a lot of disturbances and ravaged Berar and Khondesh. Therefore the

³⁹ *Shahu Maharaj Charitra*, 63.

⁴⁰ Diphe, *Bajirao* 1, 16, 17, Sardesai, *Bajirao* 1, 93, 94, *Shahu Maharaj Charitra*, 72-73, SPD, X, 39; XXX, 66. *Kavvaitihaya Samgraha Patri Yadi*, 14.

⁴¹ *Shahu Roznishi*, 29, 30, 32.

Nizam marched against him in October 1727 to protect his territory.⁴² Baji Rao's plan was to create diversion by invading his territory and thus draw out the Nizam and his forces from the Poona theatre, which was the heart of the Maratha kingdom. The Nizam tried to pursue him. His forces under Iwaz Khan were repelled by Baji Rao on 5 November in Khandesh.⁴³ Eluding the Nizam's pursuit Baji Rao entered Gujarat. Finding pursuit to be useless, the angry Nizam marched into the Poona area and with the help of his artillery captured a number of places in the month of December.⁴⁴ There at Poona he performed the marriage of Sambhaji with the daughter of a Sisodia Rajput prince of Ramnagar. When Baji Rao heard of the troubles in the Poona area he returned to Khandesh on 14 February 1728 to divert the Nizam's forces from that side.⁴⁵ The Nizam marched to meet Baji Rao to save his capital and territory from ravages. From Ahmadnagar he marched towards Khandesh in February 1728. Having no artillery, Baji Rao manoeuvred his movements in such a way as to catch the Nizam in a difficult position, so that he would be surrounded and incapable of using his artillery.

This is exactly what happened. The Nizam was entrapped at Palkhed, 20 miles to the west of Aurangabad, where food, fodder and water were scarce, and the artillery could not move. He was surrounded by Baji Rao's forces,⁴⁶ his communications were cut off. Baji Rao was accompanied by Pilaji Jadbav, Malhar Rao Holkar, Ranaji Sindhia and some other able commanders. Ultimately the Nizam was forced to surrender on 25 February 1728. His artillery, however, saved him from annihilation. Iwaz Khan started negotiations for peace and on 6 March 1728 the treaty of Mungi Sheogaon was agreed to.⁴⁷ Baji Rao had defeated the great Nizam, the foremost Mughal soldier of his time. The Nizam consented to reinstate Maratha tax-collectors, to pay up all arrears of *chauth* and *sardesh-mukhi*, and to recognize Shahu as the sole ruler of the Marathas. But he refused to surrender Sambhaji.

This treaty established Shahu's undisputed supremacy in his own country; it weakened the power of Baji Rao's rivals at Shahu's court and of the rebels in the country. It was a great success for Baji Rao, both military and political. The *swarajya* was freed from Mughal interference and the encroachments of Mughal officers. Baji Rao

42 SPD, X, 40, 46, 47, 50; XIV, 33; XXX, 50.

43 SPD, XXX, 313.

44 SPD, XVIII, 35. *Hadiqat-ul-'alam*, 139.

45 SPD, X, 48-55. *Shahu Roznishi*, 34.

46 SPD, XXX, 819.

47 SPD, XV, 88.

wanted to destroy the power of the Nizam once for all. But Shahū was not in favour of this policy. He wanted to maintain good neighbourly relations with him. Hence Baji Rao could not carry war into the Nizam's territory. This seems to be the main cause why Baji Rao subsequently directed his attention and activity to the northern field.

EMERGENCE OF KOLHAPUR STATE

Sambhaji had to leave the Nizam in March 1728 after the treaty of Mungi Sheogaon. Shahu wanted to conciliate him and settle his relations with him finally. Sambhaji had no powerful supporters left except the rebel Udaji Chavan.⁴⁸ Shahu rebuked him for going over to the Nizam. He proposed to acquire for him a small kingdom but was not prepared to partition the ancestral *swarajya* territory or to acknowledge his claims to the Maratha *rajya*.⁴⁹ Sambhaji, however, was as obstinate and self-seeking as Tarabai. He and Udaji Chavan again started trouble near the Warna river. Shahu entrusted the campaign against them to the pratinidhi, who in January 1730 defeated Sambhaji's forces completely and captured Tarabai, Rajasbai, Sambhaji's wives and some Kolhapur sardars of note. But Sambhaji escaped to the Panhala fort. Tarabai remained a prisoner with Shahu; Rajasbai and Sambhaji's wives were sent back to Sambhaji.

Unable to count any longer upon the support of the Nizam, Sambhaji submitted unconditionally and gave up his claim to half the kingdom. The two cousins met in a great *davar* on 13 April 1731. The treaty of Warna⁵⁰ consisting of nine articles settled their relations. The river Warna was made the boundary between their territories. They were to co-operate against their common enemies. They were not to employ each other's servants. This treaty created the Kolhapur state. Sambhaji accepted more or less a subordinate position which remained unchanged in subsequent years because he could not show any military ability or political sagacity. He did not take part in any of the Maratha campaigns in the south.

MARATHAS IN MALWA

After the defeat of the Nizam at Palkhed Baji Rao and Chimnaji were free to proceed to Malwa where their own commanders—Pawar, Holkar and Sindhia—were operating. The Dabhades were holding on

⁴⁸ *Kavyesikham Samgraha Patre Yadi*, 9.

⁴⁹ SPD, XI, 10.

⁵⁰ *Kavyesikham Samgraha Patre Yadi*, 20, 21. *Shahu Roznishi*, 176.

to Gujarat and the Bhonsles to Berar and Gondwana which had been respectively assigned to them as their fields of action and spheres of influence. Baji Rao and Chimnaji proceeded to the north in October 1728. They were in need of money for their armies and were in debt. They wanted to consolidate their hold on Malwa and get their rights confirmed by the emperor. Chimnaji was to operate in Malwa and Baji Rao in Bundelkhand; they were to support each other in their operations. They also wanted to assert the authority of the Maratha central government and its chief minister over the Dabhades, Bhonsles and Nimbalkars, who were showing tendencies of separatism and defiance. Their main object, however, was to weaken the Mughal power in the north and the Nizam in the south as also to compel both to recognize the Maratha rights. The Maratha advance in the north was facilitated by self-seeking and quarrelling Mughal officers and was welcomed by some Rajput and Bundela princes, chiefs and landholders.⁵¹

Geography had given Malwa an important strategic position.⁵¹ It was not only a highway of commerce, but also a military route and a base of operations for the northern invaders of the Deccan. It was also a fertile province. Malwa was being invaded by the Marathas from the time of Rajaram. The name of Nemaji Sindhia acquired prominence in this connection. Khande Rao Dabhade and Kanthaji Kadamb Bande often raided Malwa. From 1720 it was assigned as *mokasa* to the peshwa. During the early part of Baji Rao's peshwari it was held by a number of Mughal governors in succession: the Nizam-ul-mulk from 2 February 1719; Girdhar Bahadur from 30 August 1722; Azimullah from 15 May 1723; Girdhar Bahadur again from 2 June 1725; and Bhawani Ram from 29 November 1728.

When Chimnaji came to Malwa towards the close of 1728 Girdhar Bahadur was the governor. He was an able officer. Baji Rao's commanders—Pawar, Holkar and Sindhia—itad captured Mandu and Dhar, known as the gates to Malwa. Thus in 1724 was established the Peshwa's authority in south Malwa. In 1726 Pilaji Jadhav and Anand Rao Pawar had invaded Malwa and fought Girdhar Bahadur and Dava Bahadur. Girdhar had expelled Kanthaji Kadamb Bande from Malwa and was encamping at Amjhera near Sarangpur when the Marathas entered Malwa. Chimnaji and Udaji Pawar came with 22,000 troops, suddenly attacked Girdhar Bahadur at Amjhera, and after a hard-fought battle defeated him. Both Girdhar Bahadur and Dava Bahadur were killed on 29 November 1728. Then Chimnaji and Udaji proceeded to Ujjain, the capital of Malwa; but Bhawani

51 R. Sinh, *Malwa in Transition*, 2-12. Irvine, *Later Mughals*, II, 241-55.

Ram, Girdhar's son and successor to governorship, who had organized its defence, resisted them successfully. The siege was given up. In 1729 Baji Rao partitioned the Malwa *mokasa* amongst Pawar, Holkar and Sindhia and fixed their shares of revenue and that of the central government.

In October 1729 Sawai Jai Singh was appointed governor of Malwa. He was in favour of a policy of appeasement; he did not like resistance to the Marathas. He knew that the Mughals had not found it possible to drive away the Marathas from Malwa. He, therefore, proposed a settlement to Baji Rao in 1730. (1) 10 lakhs worth of territory was to be given to Shahu in lieu of *chauth* for Malwa, as jagir; (2) one sardar of Shahu was to remain with a force in Malwa to keep peace and to administer the *jagir*. Shahu agreed. But the emperor, who was at first favourably inclined towards this compromise, refused to accept it on the advice of Muhammad Khan Bangash who promised to expel the Marathas if he were appointed governor of Malwa. Consequently Sawai Jai Singh was removed and Bangash was appointed his successor on 19 September 1730.

MARATHAS IN BUNDELKHAND

While Chimaji was engaged in Malwa, Baji Rao was marching to Bundelkhand through Berar and Gondwana. The Bundela Rajputs, who had long suffered under the Mughals, welcomed the Maratha advance. Their great leader, Chhatrasal, had begun to fight against the Mughals as early as 1670 and had met Shivaji. Under Muhammad Shah, Muhammad Khan Bangash, who was then governor of Allahabad, was entrusted with the task of reducing the Bundelas and bringing them to obedience. In 1727 he commenced hostilities against them. Chhatrasal had already defeated his son and officers who had been sent against him. Then the Bangash marched in person in 1728 in with a large force. There was a severe battle between him and Chhatrasal in June 1728. The Bundelas were hard pressed. In December 1728 Chhatrasal and his men were defeated near Jaitpur, which he was compelled to surrender. Baji Rao at that time was marching towards Bundelkhand and Baghelkhand. He was at Garha Mandla in February 1729. He was secretly requested by Chhatrasal for succour. He was accompanied by Pilaji Jadhav and other able commanders with 25,000 troops.

In March 1729 Chhatrasal and his son met Baji Rao at Mahoba. The struggle between Baji Rao and Bangash started immediately. Bangash had good artillery. Baji Rao, however, by his superior manoeuvres surrounded him at Jaitpur. His son Qaim Khan who was coming to help him was defeated on 28 April 1729. All his

communications and supplies were cut off. In August 1729 Bangash was forced to surrender at Jaitpur. He agreed to leave Bundelkhand and not to attack Chhatrasal again. Baji Rao had already left for the south and reached Poona on 16 July. At the time of his death in 1731 Chhatrasal left one-third of his territory in Bundelkhand to Baji Rao. His two sons, Hirdesa and Jagatraj, and Baji Rao were to help one another.⁵² Thus Baji Rao by his successes in 1728 and 1729 got a strong foothold and base in Malwa and Bundelkhand in the heart of the Mughal empire.

MARATHAS IN GUJARAT

Baji Rao then directed his attention to Gujarat⁵³ and the Dabhades. The Marathas had been attacking Gujarat since the first sack of Surat by Shivaji in 1664. Dhamaji Jadhav had raided Gujarat during Tarabai's regency (1700-1707) and defeated local forces. Again the Mughal forces were defeated during 1707-1712 in the Tapti region. The Marathas had secured their hold on a portion of south Gujarat. Khande Rao Dabhade at that time held Baglan and Khandesh as an assignment for the collection of *chauth* and controlled the route between Khandesh and Gujarat. He was, however, encroaching on Gujarat and establishing his authority there.⁵⁴ In 1719 Shahu ordered him to collect *chauth* in Gujarat. In 1726 Shahu gave him only one-half *mokasa* of Gujarat and the other half to Chinnaji Dabhade had not been consistently loyal to Shahu.⁵⁵ Though he had joined Shahu in 1707, he went over to Tarabai in 1708. He again came over to Shahu in 1710 when he was made *Sena khas khel*. But again he went over to Tarabai in 1711. He again came over to Shahu and was made *senapati* on 11 January 1717. When he was ordered by Shahu in 1719 to collect *chauth* from Gujarat he began to consider Gujarat as his own assignment and field of operation. In 1719 Pilaji Gaikwad, acting on behalf of Dabhade, marched on Surat and defeated the Mughal troops there. He collected *chauth* and established himself at Songarh, about 50 miles east of Surat. So the Maratha-Mughal struggle in Gujarat started afresh in 1719. Baji Rao himself attacked Surat on 7 March 1721. Thus Gujarat's politics developed

⁵² Pogson, *Bundelias, Parasnaths, Bihasa Samgraha* (*Bundela Prakarana*). *Brahmendra Swami Charitra*, Appendix No 43. Irvine, *Later Mughals* II 216-38. SPD, XIV, 8, 9

⁵³ *Mirat-i-Ahmadi*, I, 379-88. Manucci, IV, 240-47. Irvine, *Later Mughals*, II, 155-215. *Bombay Gazetteer*, Vol. I, Part I, 295-97, 302-18.

⁵⁴ Gense and Banaji, *Golkwads of Baroda*, I, 1-2 SPD, XXX, 307.

⁵⁵ SPD, XII, I, XXX, 307, 349.

three aspects: (1) a contest between the Marathas and the Mughals; (2) quarrels between Maratha sardars over their respective spheres of influence; and (3) quarrels between Mughal officers themselves, and their invitation to the Marathas for help.

Gujarat, like Malwa, was a fertile and rich province. It had a extensive coast line and was important commercially and strategically. It bordered Maharashtra on the north. Between 1720 and 1730 Haider Quli Khan, Nizam-ul-mulk and Sarbuland Khan served as governors of this subah. It was the Nizam-ul-mulk (governor of Gujarat from 24 October 1722 to December 1723) who advised his deputy in Gujarat, Hamid Khan, to enlist Maratha help to oppose Shujaat Khan, the deputy of the new governor Sarbuland Khan. The Nizam-ul-mulk wanted to acquire Gujarat just as he had acquired the Deccan. Hamid Khan sought the aid of Kanthaji Kadambande who agreed to assist him in return for a promise of *chauth*. In 1723 Dabhade was able to collect *chauth* from Gujarat. In 1724 Kanthaji helped Hamid Khan, who defeated and killed Shujaat Khan. Rustam Ali Khan, Shujaat's brother, who came to punish Hamid Khan, sought Pilaji Gaikwad's help. But Gaikwad proved a broken reed. Rustam Ali Khan was finally defeated and killed at Basu, 25 miles from Ahmadabad, on 11 February 1725, by Hamid Khan who was assisted not only by Kanthaji Kadambande but also by the peshwa's agent, Udaji Pawar. Kanthaji got the right of collecting *chauth* north of the river Mahi and Pilaji south of it. Baji Rao's agents got the right to collect *chauth* in several districts bordering on Malwa. Thus the imperial rule weakened in Gujarat, and grave disorder occurred in the subah. A civil war between Mughal officers and another between Maratha assignees—one for authority, the other for *chauth*—were going on. Hamid Khan had defeated and killed Shujaat Khan and Rustam Ali Khan; but soon afterwards he withdrew from the contest at the instance of his master, Nizam-ul-mulk, leaving the coast clear for Sarbuland Khan. In April 1725 Bande defeated Gaikwad near Cambay; but soon afterwards they joined together and were defeated in January 1726 by Sarbuland Khan's troops. Meanwhile the peshwa's force, led by Udaji Pawar, entered Gujarat and besieged Vadnagar. Sarbuland Khan did not command sufficient strength to fight both the forces—Dabhade's and the peshwa's—one from the south and the other from the west. He, therefore, agreed to grant *chauth*⁵⁶ to the peshwa's agents, but not to Dabhade's, on 20 February 1727.

Disputes now arose between rival Maratha chieftains for the right

to *chauth* in Gujarat. Sarbuland Khan sought the peshwa's aid against Dabhade's agents; this was a condition attached to the grant of the *chauth*. But Dabhade's agents proved very troublesome and powerful. To avoid their quarrels and encroachments Shahu agreed to give the whole assignment of Gujarat to Dabhade on 1 August 1727.⁵⁷ But this arrangement did not ensure peace between the peshwa and Dabhade. While Baji Rao was engaged in hostilities with the Nizam in 1728, Dabhade's forces raided Malwa which was the peshwa's assignment. Shahu not only scolded Dabhade for this but also took away in 1729 the whole *mokasa* of Gujarat and granted it to the peshwa, as Dabhade had evaded payment of Shahu's share in the dues collected. The peshwa was not desirous to take it but Shahu forced it on him.

On 27 September 1729 Khande Rao Dabhade died and his son Trimbak Rao Dabhade became senapati on 8 January 1730. In December 1729 Chimmaji and Udaji Pawar entered Gujarat.⁵⁸ They captured Pawagarh and defeated Bande. On 23 March 1730 Sarbuland Khan renewed the treaty of 1727 with Chimmaji and recognized the Maratha rights of *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* in the whole province. In return for it the peshwa was to keep 2,500 horse for maintaining peace and imperial authority in the province. Only two or three persons were to be appointed in each district for collection of *chauth*.

This agreement was disliked both by Dabhade and the emperor. In June 1730 Sarbuland Khan was removed and Abhai Singh of Marwar was appointed governor of Gujarat. He captured Ahmadabad on 10 October. Dabhade decided to oppose the peshwa's authority and rights in Gujarat. Shahu, however, in order to remove the root cause of the quarrel, took away the *mokasa* of Gujarat⁵⁹ from Chimmaji and again granted it as a whole to Dabhade on 15 December 1730. In spite of this, Dabhade continued to oppose the peshwa and his authority and prepared for war. The Nizam, who wanted to reduce the power of the peshwa and to weaken the Maratha state, promised help to Dabhade who had entered into secret relations with Baji Rao's enemies. Thus strengthened, Trimbak Rao Dabhade appealed to arms against the peshwa. He professed to restore Shahu's authority which had been usurped by Baji Rao. He would not agree to any concession or compromise in regard to the joint collection of *chauth* from Gujarat and Malwa.

⁵⁷ *Shahu Roznishi*, 159.

⁵⁸ SPD, XV, 88; XXX, 317. Gense and Banaji, *The Gaikwars of Baroda*, I, 10.

⁵⁹ SPD, X, 58; XII, 33, 34, 39; XVII, 12; XXX, 71, 317.

To prevent the evil results of a Dabhade-Nizam alliance, to enforce his own claims and to bring the rebel Dabhade into obedience to the central authority, Baji Rao marched into Gujarat in December 1730.⁶⁰ He assured the Mughal governor that he would respect the treaty of 1727. The Nizam also started in December 1730 to help Dabhade. His aim was to defeat the peshwa, to place Sambhaji on the throne, and to abolish the rights of *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi*. In order to strengthen his forces he opened negotiations with Muhammad Khan Bangash, governor of Malwa, for making a joint effort to expel the Marathas from the north. He carried on secret negotiations with him in March 1731 at Akbarpur. At the same time Baji Rao met Abhai Singh at Ahmadabad. They decided to expel Pilaji Gaikwad and marched against him. At that time Baji Rao learnt that Dabhade, Bande, Gaikwad and Udaji Pawar had joined together and were going to march against him as soon as the Nizam joined them.⁶¹ Baji Rao immediately decided to attack Dabhade's forces and to offer battle to them before the Nizam could effect a junction with them. Chiinnaji was watching the Nizam from Khandesh. Baji Rao met the forces of Dabhade on 1 April 1731 on the plain of Bithapur near Dabhoi.⁶² Dabhade had 30,000 troops and Baji Rao 25,000. The contest was a very severe one, heavy casualties followed. Trimbak Rao did not surrender even after the battle was lost. He fought single-handed from his elephant till a bullet-wound killed him. The victorious peshwa prevented any loot or pursuit. Thus Baji Rao taught a severe lesson to rebellious Maratha sardars. When he returned to Poona in May 1731 he wanted to punish the Nizam for his provocation and duplicity, but Shahu did not favour this plan.

THE KONKAN

During this period Kanhoji Angria⁶³ played an important part on the western coast. He was the guardian of the western coast of the Maratha kingdom. He had entered into a treaty with the English in 1713 settling mutual relations and rights as regards movements of ships, merchants and goods. There was also an agreement⁶⁴ between him and Shahu in 1714 settling their political and territorial relations. In 1715 the Sidis had entered into an agreement with him providing

⁶⁰ SPD, XII, 27.

⁶¹ SPD, X, 66; XII, 58, XXX, 317.

⁶² SPD, X, 71, 72; XII, 46, 54, 57, 63. *Brahmenka Swami Chaitra*, Appendix 26, 188, 352.

⁶³ Dabhoi, *Angres of Kolaba*.

⁶⁴ Mawji and Parasnis, *Treaties, Agreements and Sanads*, 197.

for peace and non-aggression. Only the Portuguese had not as yet come to any understanding with him. Kanhoji by his ability and diplomacy, bravery and maritime power, was able to keep in check the enemies of the Marathas on the western coast.⁶⁵ He remained loyal to Shahu and strengthened his naval forces to meet his enemies.

The chief aim of the Konkan policy of the Marathas was to destroy the hold of foreign powers on the western coast and to keep control over their own territorial waters and ports in the Konkan area. The foreign powers wanted to destroy the Maratha power and to maintain their naval and coastal supremacy. Kanhoji was trying to gain control over the Maratha coastal area from Surat to Karwar.⁶⁶ He actually controlled the area only from Khandesh to Vengurla. Kolaba and Vijayadurg were the fortified ports. He had good ships and brave sailors. He insisted on foreigners taking Maratha permits while sailing on the seas near the Maratha coast. The English also started issuing permits to those who wanted to trade with Bombay. The Portuguese also claimed a similar right. Conflicts over such competing claims were unavoidable. Each of these rivals captured ships which did not possess their permits, confiscated their goods, and sometimes imprisoned their crews. This was inconsistent with the terms of the agreement of 1713 between Kanhoji and the English referred to above. It provided that Kanhoji would not meddle with any English ship or with any ship that was going to any English harbour between Mahim and Khanderi; moreover, he would grant English merchants the free use of his ports on payment of usual customs. The English, on their part, undertook to grant to Angria free use of their port of Bombay on payment of usual customs, and promised that they would not permit their colours to be used by others' ships. Naturally Kanhoji refused to allow the ships belonging to the Portuguese or the Sidis or others to sail in his waters under English colours or permits and avoid taking his permits and paying his duties. He also resented the English providing the Portuguese and the Sidis with weapons, supplies and military aid against the Marathas.

The new English governor Charles Boone, who came in December 1715, was a strong man; he wanted to put down Angria's claims and curb his naval power. The English navy sailed against Vijayadurg, Angria's seat of power, on 17 April 1718; but it was defended bravely and the British fleet had to retire in discomfiture to Bombay

⁶⁵ *Brahmendra Swami Chavitra*, p. 43, Appendix 310, 330, 358. Rajwade, III, Introduction, 244. *Shahu Roznishi*, 50, 58, 59, 61, 63, 304.

⁶⁶ *Kavyesihasa Samgraha*, 22. Rajwade, II, p. 62; XVI, 81; XVII, 19. *Purandare Daftari*, I, 102-8.

on 18 June 1718. Another attack was made on 2 November 1718; once again Charles Boone returned humiliated. A third attack followed on 19 September 1719 under Walter Brown; it also was foiled. The English after these reverses sought the co-operation of the Portuguese who were anxious to destroy Angria's power. There was an agreement on 20 August 1721 for a joint attack on Kolaba; in the event of success Kolaba was to be occupied by the Portuguese while Gheria was to go to the English. They gathered a large fleet and a large number of sailors. Shahi sent Baji Rao and Pilaji Jadhav with 7,000 troops to help Kanhoji. On 12 December 1721 the allied Europeans attacked Kolaba, but were defeated by the Maratha forces. The Portuguese readily made a separate treaty with Baji Rao on 1 January 1722 at Alibag. They agreed not to convoy ships belonging to the enemies of the Marathas, and even to help the Marathas against their enemies. The ports of both nations were thrown open to the merchants of either party. The English were called upon to accept similar terms within eight days. They refused and were isolated. Kanhoji gained a naval victory over them on 14 March 1722. After that the English did not trouble him. He died at Kolaba on 7 July 1729.

THE SIDIS

The third quinquennium of Baji Rao's regime, from 1730 to 1735, is important for the campaigns against the Sidis, for further progress in Malwa, and for the beginning of Maratha-Rajput contact.

The Sidis were the admirals, first of the Nizam Shahi and then of the Adil Shahi kingdom, on the western coast from Nagothna to Bankot. They were a brave and able band of naval officers. Shivaji deprived them of their inland possessions; but he was not able to capture their island fortress of Janjira for want of good artillery and ships. After 1670 the Sidis became Mughal admirals. They often ravaged and looted Shivaji's territory up to the Nagothna creek and committed atrocities on the people, captured them and sold them into slavery. During Aurangzib's invasion they became powerful again. They regained a number of inland possessions and even captured Raigad, Shivaji's capital. When the Sidis attacked Alibag in 1700 Kanhoji Angria defeated them and recovered gradually most of the Maratha territory they had usurped. In 1714 the Sidis, the Portuguese and the Mughals made a joint attack on him, but they were defeated with the help of Balaji, the first peshwa.⁶⁷ Still a part

of *swarajya* territory remained under the Sidis. They held the Kolaba district except Alibag and Pen taluks. Their territory reached Chiplun and Anjanwel in the south. It also included Raigad and such important places on the coast as Underi, Chaul, Thal, Rewas, Bankot, Dabhol and Anjanwel.

Rasul Yaqut Khan was the head of the Sidis of Janjira from 1707 to 1733. An agreement made in 1715 lasted till 1726. Fresh trouble⁶⁸ started in that year. Sidi Sat of Anjanwel was a cruel and bigoted officer. He had requested Brahmendra Swami of the Konkan, a religious teacher and influential person, to help him in conveying safely to his place an elephant given hūn by the nawab of Savanur. The animal reached Sangameshwar safely, but Angria's officers sent it to Jaygad as it did not carry his permit. Sidi Sat got angry with the Swami. He attacked the Swami's temple of Parashuram and destroyed it on 8 February 1727. He tortured and looted its worshippers. The Swami cursed the Sidi and left the Konkan for Dhawadshi, a place near Satara, in 1728. He urged Shahu, Angria, Baji Rao and other Maratha sardars to destroy the Sidis. But Kanhoji died on 4 July 1729, and his son Sekhoji⁶⁹ succeeded him on 21 July. The Sidis started raiding the Maratha territory, but Shahu and his officers were engaged in wars against Sambhaji and Dabhade in 1730 and 1731. In 1730-31 the pratinidhi was sent against the Sidis, but he did nothing. He and Sekhoji did not work together. On 12 February 1732 Sekhoji met Baji Rao at Kolaba and settled the plan of the Janjira campaign.⁷⁰ Sidi Rasul died in February 1733. There were quarrels between his sons for succession. His eldest son Abdullah was killed. Abdullah's son, Abdur Rahman, asked for Shahu's help.⁷¹ The situation was now favourable to the Marathas. Shahu sent Baji Rao and Fateh Singh Bhonsle to attack the Sidis, in April 1733.

For the Maratha king the recovery of Shivaji's old capital (Raigad) was a matter of prestige. For the peshwa the recovery of his ancestral home (Srivardhan) from the oppressive rule of the Sidis was a matter of sentiment. For the Maratha state the suppression of the Sidis—the representative of Mughal power on the west as the Nizam was on the east—was a pressing political need.

The first phase of the campaign lasted from May to August 1733. Baji Rao carried on the campaign in the north. On 2 May he captured Rajpuri, Taleghosale, Birwadi, Chaul and other places and then

⁶⁸ *Brahmendra Swami Charitra*.

⁶⁹ SPD, XXXIII, 1.

⁷⁰ *Rajwade*, III, 10, 242, 244.

⁷¹ *Shahu Bakhar*, 89, SPD, XXX, 95.

prepared to attack Janjira itself.⁷² Baji Rao and Sekhoji Angria had agreed about the plan of the campaign. Shahu, however, sent Sripal Rao pratinidhi on 20 May in order to end the campaign soon. The pratinidhi carried on his operation in the south. Baji Rao had arranged to take Raigad by force, but the pratinidhi took it by bribery on 8 June.⁷³ Baji Rao did not like this interference. He wanted the pratinidhi to work under his command and carry out his directions, but the pratinidhi refused even to meet him.⁷⁴ This led to differences and rivalries amongst Maratha commanders. The English and the Portuguese came to help the Sidis as they did not want the Marathas to become powerful in the Konkan. The Portuguese were to attack Chaul and the English Kolaba. The English took Underi on 16 July and thus endangered Angria's territory.⁷⁵ Sekhoji's death on 28 August added to the troubles of the Marathas. His younger brother Sambhaji succeeded him. He refused to co-operate with Baji Rao. There were quarrels between the Angria brothers, Sambhaji and Manaji, about succession, partition of the estate, and sarkhelship. Hence the campaign in the north against Janjira was not successful. Baji Rao did not have sufficient artillery and naval support. The rains stopped the campaign. In the south the pratinidhi had since 1732 been besieging Anjanwel where Sidi Sat was fighting.⁷⁶ Bakaji Naik, who was helping the pratinidhi, defeated Sidi Sat near Chiplun, and drove him to Gowalkot. He wanted to destroy the Sidi chief, but the pratinidhi tried to win him over by diplomacy. The crafty Sidi pretended to agree to his proposals (14 July 1733); but when the siege of Gowalkot was abandoned he refused to abide by the terms.

Thus the peshwa and the pratinidhi failed in this campaign. There was no unity of command and direction. There were in this campaign four independent armies and commands: Shahu's forces under Fateh Singh and the separate forces of the peshwa, the pratinidhi and Angria. Their plans of operations were different, their rivalries were self-destructive, their diplomacy was conflicting. They tried to defeat one another's plan by withholding help and wished their opponent's failure.⁷⁷ Shahu's forces were not particularly active.

⁷² *Purandare Daftari*, I, 104. SPD, III, 2, XXX, 322. XXXIII, 11, 15, 22, 23, 30, 37, 39, 58.

⁷³ SPD, II, 4, 7, 27.

⁷⁴ *Purandare Daftari*, I, 105. Rajwade, VI, 86.

⁷⁵ SPD, XXXIII, 83-85. *Shahu Roznishi*, 58-61. Rajwade, III, 242-60. *Brahmaputra Swami Charitra*, Appendix 128.

⁷⁶ *Purandare Daftari*, I, 104. Rajwade, III, 330; VI, 86.

⁷⁷ Rajwade, VI, 86. SPD, III, 19, 21; XXVIII, 38, 48, 62.

The Sidis still retained Janjira and Underi in the north and Anjanwel and Gowalkot in the south.⁷⁸ Their strength lay in their seagirt fortress, in the military and naval assistance they got from the Portuguese and the English, in the support of the Mughal officers, and in their own military enterprise and naval skill. They were also helped by want of unity of counsel and action amongst their opponents, and by their lack of sufficient naval strength. The rainy season of 1733 (July-October) gave them ample time to strengthen the defences of Anjanwel, Gowalkot, Janjira, Vijayagad and Underi.

When the rainy season was over the campaign was not seriously resumed. Gowalkot was besieged, but in vain. An attempt to surprise Anjanwel failed. Sambhaji and Manaji quarrelled.⁷⁹ Sambhaji would not help the peshwa. Manaji was not sufficiently strong to help him. Angria's forces were weakened by division. In October 1733 the pratinidhi returned to Satara. On 6 December 1733 the Sidis and the English entered into a treaty of mutual assistance for the destruction of Angria's power, to capture the fort of Khanderi, and to destroy Kolaba. Baji Rao, however, thought it prudent to withdraw from the campaign owing to political rivalries, family disputes amongst the Marathas, and want of proper equipment. On 11 December 1733 Baji Rao and the Sidis entered into a treaty of peace at Navdare near Alibag.⁸⁰ Baji Rao raised the siege of Janjira. Sidi Abdur Rahman, the peshwa's nominee, was recognized as the ruler of Janjira. Five and a half *mahals* were given to him. Other conquests were retained by the Marathas. Thus ended the first phase of the campaign. The Sidi had lost his possessions on land and it was a question of time when his power would be completely crushed.

The second phase started in January 1734 when the Sidis started the offensive by laying siege to Bankot. They captured it and also Mahad. Then they besieged Raigad. But Shahu's troops recovered Mahad in January 1734 and relieved Raigad in February. Here Udayji Pawar showed great bravery and killed Sidi Ambar Afwani. Bankot was recaptured on 8 March 1734.⁸¹ After Baji Rao had left for Khandesh in May 1734 Shahu ordered Sambhaji Angria to take charge of the campaign. For him the capture of Anjanwel and Gowalkot, which were in the hands of Sidi Sat, was a military necessity in the interest of the security of his territories. Shahu directed the campaign from

⁷⁸ SPD, XXXIII, 68-65; III, 23. Forrest, *Selections, Home Series*, II, 54.

⁷⁹ SPD, III, 24, 50-52, 62, 34, 42. Forrest, *Selections*, II; *Surat Diaries*, 61.

⁸⁰ SPD, III, 56, 100, 102, 103, XXX, p. 328; XXVIII, 117, 131, 136. *Shahu Roznishi*, 140, 141. Rajwade, VI, 87; III, 331. *Brahmendra Swami Charitra*, 54, 56, 58.

⁸¹ SPD, XXXIII, 149-64; III, 173.

the capital. There was neither a common command nor unity of direction in the field of military operations. The army consisted of small contingents of feudal nobles often at cross-purposes, and without military skill, competent leadership and proper equipment and organization. They often suspected and conspired against one another. The campaign dragged on for several months till the rains cut it off (July 1734).

Then followed a civil war between the Angrias from November 1734 to May 1735.⁸² The English and the Portuguese took advantage of it. They helped Manaji against Sambhaji. Baji Rao also favoured Manaji. Sambhaji retired to his southern possessions. This weakened the Angrias' sea-power and their loyalty and value to the Maratha state. Though the siege of Gowalkot was being carried on, Sambhaji could not give any effective help. Shahu's troops remained inactive and failed to support the siege operations. Again the rains interfered (July 1735) and advanced positions had to be abandoned.⁸³ In January 1735 Manaji took Anjanwel. Baji Rao went to Kolaba in February 1735 to settle the Angrias' disputes. He remained there from 4 February to 3 April and made them reach a settlement. Manaji remained at Kolaba in the north and Sambhaji as *sarkhel* retained Vijayadurg in the south.

The third and final phase of the Janjira campaign lasted from October 1735 to April 1736. Baji Rao personally did not take part in this campaign. The English tried to bring about an understanding between Sambhaji and the Sidis. They sent a powerful fleet to make a demonstration against his coastal territory and to put pressure upon him. The Portuguese also joined the English. As a consequence Angria's commander at Gowalkot, who was already disgusted with the behaviour of Shahu's troops, withdrew. Shahu's troops also had to retire. This gave Sidi Sat an opportunity to take the offensive. He burnt and looted coastal villages belonging to Sambhaji. The English however, mediated a treaty between him and Sidi Sat (October 1735). Sidi Sat then directed his attack against Shahu's forces with the help of the naval guns of the British. He took Bankot on 5 November 1735 from the peshwa's forces. Then he proceeded towards Mahad and Raigad. Shahu now realised the gravity of the situation. He ordered Chimnaji to go to the Konkan and take charge of the campaign. Chimnaji reached there on 3 March 1736. Manaji Angria co-operated with him. All troops were put under his command. Fresh troops were levied. Pilaji Jadhav, an able commander,

⁸² *Kavvithasa Sameraha Patre*, 33, SPD, III, 112, XXI, 113.

⁸³ SPD, III, 9, 116, 117; XXXIII, 59, 190, 259, 289.

had accompanied Chimnaji. Sidi Sat, defeated at Mahad, withdrew from Bankot. Pilaji then besieged Gowalkot. Shahu's troops did not reach in time. Sidi Sat went to Bombay. With help from the English he captured Rewas and also threatened Manaji's Kolaba. Chimnaji went to Manaji's help. A severe battle took place between Chimnaji and Sidi Sat on 19 April 1736.⁸⁴ Sidi Sat's forces were completely destroyed. Sidi Sat himself and Sidi Yaqut of Underi were killed. It was a hard-fought but splendid victory for Chimnaji. Sidi Sat's party, which was fanatically hostile to the Marathas, was completely destroyed.

This was the end of the campaign. Sidi Abdur Rahman, the ruler of Janjira, stopped the war and agreed to abide by the treaty of 1734⁸⁵ which had been made with Baji Rao. Anjanwel and Gowalkot were left in the hands of the Sidis for the time being, as Pilaji's forces were small and Shahu's forces were useless militarily. Sambhaji had proved himself disloyal. The Sidis' sea-power, however, was greatly reduced. It rapidly declined and they became tributaries of the Marathas.

MARATHA ADVANCE IN MALWA AND BUNDELKHAND

During the period 1730-35 the Marathas made good progress in the occupation of Malwa and in breaking the power of the Mughal officers in that province. From 19 September 1730 to 28 September 1732 Muhammad Khan Bangash was the governor to Malwa. When asking for the post he had boastfully promised to drive away the Marathas. In 1729 Udaji Pawar, an able general, fell out with Baji Rao; they had differences in the matter of collection of revenue and payment of dues from the area under his charge. He had worked with Baji Rao from 1720. Baji Rao had given him in December 1722 half the portion of his own half-assignment in Malwa and Gujarat. He had taken a leading part in all the northern campaigns. In 1726 there was a redivision of the Malwa assignment between Udaji Pawar, Malhar Rao Holkar and Ranoji Sindhia.⁸⁶ Again on 15 September 1729 there was a new settlement of shares between them made by Baji Rao. But in 1730 Udaji joined Dabhade's party. Baji Rao confiscated the Pawars' *saranjam* (assignment) on 29 January 1731. The two other Pawar brothers, Anand Rao and Tukoji, however, got their assignments again recognized in 1732, though Udaji remained aloof. After Udaji's desertion Malhar Rao Holkar and Ranoji Sindhia came forward in

⁸⁴ *Shahu Roznshi*, 62, 66, 68, 70, 193, 268, 289.

⁸⁵ SPD, XXXIII, 491. Mawji and Paransis, *Treaties, Agreements, and Sanads*, 107-13. *Brahmendra Swami Charitra*, Appendix 129, 130, 384.

⁸⁶ SPD, XXX, 317, 318; XXII, 58.

Malwa. Malhar Rao, a shepherd by caste, was a commander in the army of Baji Rao in 1725. Ranoji Sindhia, a Maratha by caste, also rose from a low position. Both had proved to be unrivalled cavalry leaders and military commanders in the Maratha campaigns in the north. In 1730-31 Baji Rao gave them power to make settlement with local landholders and chiefs in Malwa and to realize the Maratha dues.⁸⁷

Bangash took charge of Malwa and reached Sarangpur on 26 January 1731. On 17 March he and the Nizam met for twelve days at Akbarpur to decide upon measures against the Marathas.⁸⁸ They contemplated a joint attack; but Bangash could not move as he did not receive sufficient help from the emperor. The Nizam, finding Dabhade defeated by Baji Rao in April 1731, temporized. Thus Bangash was left alone and had not sufficient troops to start the offensive though he was successful at first. The Marathas, who were now more powerful after the Gujarat campaign, pressed him hard. He had to come to an understanding with them by agreeing to their demand for *chauth* for one year. He could not resist the forces of Sindhia and Holkar. The emperor had grown suspicious about Bangash because of his association with the Nizam. He lost credit in Delhi and was removed from the governorship of Malwa.⁸⁹ Sawai Jai Singh was again appointed to the post which he held from 20 September 1732 to 3 August 1737.

In 1732 Baji Rao made a deed of assignment of Malwa defining the shares of Holkar, Sindhia and the Pawars. This settlement laid the foundation of four Maratha states in Malwa: those of Holkar, Sindhia and the two Pawars. In September 1732 the Nizam suggested to Shahu a meeting between him and Baji Rao. The meeting actually took place on 27 December 1732 at Rohe Rameshwari⁹⁰ on the river Manjira, south of the Godavari in the Nizam's territory. We have no record of what was settled in that meeting. It seems that the Nizam agreed not to interfere in Maratha affairs at home and in the north.

Jai Singh reached Ujjain in December 1732. The emperor supplied him with 20 lakhs of rupees for raising an army and driving out the Marathas. Chimnaji marched from Bundelkhand to Malwa to meet him. Jai Singh was at Mandasor on 18 January 1733. Holkar, Sindhia and the Pawars entered Malwa from Gujarat and surrounded Jai Singh

⁸⁷ SPD, XXX, 317.

⁸⁸ SPD, X, 70; XVII, 8.

⁸⁹ J. A. S. B., 1878, Part IV, 300-23.

⁹⁰ Rajwade, III, 87. SPD, IX, 7, 32, X, 83, 85, XVIII, 34; XXX, 90, 91, Brahmaendra Swami Charitra, Appendix 121.

at Mandasor. They cut off his grain and water supplies. He sued for peace and offered 6 lakhs of rupees in February 1733. But no agreement was reached. A severe engagement followed; again Jai Singh found himself cut off and overpowered. He made peace and agreed to give 6 lakhs in cash and to cede 28 *paraganahs* in lieu of *chauth*⁹¹ (February 1733).

Chimnaji marched back into Bundelkhand. Chhatrasal had died on 14 December 1731. Baji Rao wanted to secure his portion of Chhatrasal's territory (as granted by Chhatrasal himself) and make it one of his strong military bases for northern campaigns. Each of Chhatrasal's two sons, Hirdesa and Jagatraj, promised to give one and a quarter lakh of rupees worth of territory to Baji Rao. All the three agreed to help one another in case of peril. Baji Rao obtained his jagir. Chimnaji appointed Govind Ballal Kher⁹² to settle the details and to administer the jagir on behalf of the peshwa. Other chiefs of Bundelkhand, such as the rulers of Datia, Orchha and Narwar, did not welcome the Marathas as they exacted tribute from them. They sought the help of Delhi and assisted the Mughals in their wars against them. For two years (1732-34) Jai Singh tried to expel the Marathas but failed. He tried to unite the Rajput chiefs at a conference held at Hurla in Mewar.⁹³ A written agreement was arrived at on 17 July 1734 to the effect that they should assemble their forces at Rampura at the time of the campaign against the Marathas. But very few came. The emperor also sent two armies—one to Bundelkhand and the other to Malwa—against the Marathas. Baji Rao ordered Pilaji Jadhav to go to the north to meet the threat of the Rajputs and the Mughals. He himself left on 17 November 1734 for Bundelkhand.⁹⁴

Qamir-ul-din Khan, the emperor's chief minister, started with 25,000 troops on 20 November 1734 towards Bundelkhand. He had a strong artillery. He fought a number of battles with Pilaji Jadhav but was finally surrounded by the Marathas in February 1735 near Orchha and compelled to agree to peace.⁹⁵ He gave 5 lakhs as compensation to Pilaji. About the same time Holkar and Sindhia were successful against the imperialists under Khan Dauran in the Rampura area. The Rajputs fought along with the Mughals. There were Jai Singh Abhai Singh and others. Khan Dauran⁹⁶ agreed to pay 22 lakhs in lieu of

91 SPD. XIV, 1, 2, 7, 8, 9, 12; XV, 6; XVII, 60.

92 SPD. XXX, 94, 98, 103; XIV, 7, 8, 9.

93 Tod (ed. Crooke), I, 430, 431. R. Sinh. *Malwa in Transition*. 229.

94 Sardesai, *Bajirao I*, 272, 273.

95 SPD. XIV, 9, 22, 23; XXX, 320.

96 SPD. XIV, 21-29, 57; XXII, 299.

chauth on 24 March 1736 near Kotah. In spite of good artillery and a large number of troops the imperialists did not succeed against the masterly movements and manoeuvres of the Maratha forces, especially cavalry.

The contest in Malwa and Bundelkhand brought the Marathas into contact with Rajputana chiefs militarily as also politically. This led to direct Maratha involvement in the mutual strife among the Rajput princes. The first important case of Maratha interference in Rajputana arose in connection with the affairs of Bundi. Sawai Jai Singh of Amber occupied Bundi by force (September 1729). Holkar and Sindha occupied it and restored it to its legitimate ruler under orders from Shahi (April 1734). But as soon as they left Jai Singh recaptured it. Baji Rao prevented Holkar from going to Bundi again as he wanted to remain on good terms with Jai Singh at that time and to win over the Rajputs against the Mughals. In 1735 the Marathas were entering the imperial territory in the province of Ajmer. They avoided general engagements, harassed imperial troops, and levied contributions. In March 1735 they sacked the town of Sambhar between Delhi and Ajmer. Realising that Mughal resistance could not check their progress, Jai Singh recommended to the emperor a policy of appeasement and compromise with the Marathas.

BAJI RAO'S NORTHERN EXPEDITIONS (1735-37)

The last quinquennium of Baji Rao's regime (1735-40) is important for further progress in Malwa and greater contact with the Rajputs as also for Baji Rao's attack on Delhi, the victory over the Nizam, his march against Nadir Shah, his victory over Nasir Jang, and Chinmaji's conquest of Bassein.

In the court politics of Delhi there were two parties in respect of Maratha affairs. The party of appeasement consisted of Khan Dauran and Sawai Jai Singh who were for conciliation of the Marathas by granting them *chauth* so as to maintain peace and secure their support. The party of resistance was composed of Saadat Khan, Nizam-ul-anulk, Muhammad Khan Bangash and Abhai Singh of Marwar who opposed Maratha claims. Qaror-ud-din-khan, the chief minister, was not committed definitely to any one party. On 4 October 1735 Baji Rao⁹⁷ left for the north to assert his claims and to frustrate the designs of the party of opposition who were plotting to grab for themselves several provinces like Avadh, the Deccan, Malwa and

⁹⁷ SPD. XIV. 39, 42, 47. XXIV. 306-9. XXIX. 39.

Gujarat.⁹⁷ This was to be Baji Rao's last and greatest campaign against the leaders of anti-Maratha party, Saadat Khan, Muhammad Khan Bangash and Nizam-ul-mulk.

Baji Rao at first wanted to win over the Rajput rulers to his side. The rulers of Jaipur and Udaipur had already sent envoys to Shahi for establishing cordial relations with the Marathas. In 1730 Jai Singh had sent Deep Singh as an envoy to the court of Satara for collecting information about Maratha polities and personalities. Baji Rao now proposed to the rulers of Rajputana to join and assist him against the anti-Maratha party in the court of Delhi. He informed the emperor that unless his rights to *chauth* as also to the governorship of Malwa and Gujarat were recognized he would be compelled to employ force. But the anti-Maratha party at the court did not agree to the peshwa's demands. The emperor decided to sent forces against the Marathas and called Saadat Khan to Delhi. But Sawai Jai Singh saw the futility of this opposition and preferred compromise. He requested Baji Rao to meet him for a discussion of his claims. Baji Rao decided to meet Jai Singh and other Rajput rulers and, through their mediation to visit the emperor as well.

Baji Rao found the maharana of Udaipur friendly to him and agreeable to pay one and a half lakh as *chauth*. The peshwa's next step was a march towards Jaipur. The emperor, conscious of his own weakness, had become agreeable to a meeting with Baji Rao. Before meeting Baji Rao Jai Singh had proposed the terms of settlement⁹⁸ with him. They were: '1. a cash subsidy of 20 lakhs, (2) a jagir of 40 lakhs in Malwa, and '3. a *tankha* on the territory of Dost Muhammad Ruhela of Bhopal. Baji Rao heard of these terms and went to Jaipur to meet Jai Singh. They met at Bambhola⁹⁹ on 4 March 1736. Jai Singh informed him of the terms of settlement proposed by him. He also promised to bring about a meeting between him and the emperor and to secure *farman*s of *chauth* on Malwa and Gujarat. Baji Rao remained in Rajputana till May and then started for Poona, leaving Sindhia, Holkar and the Pawars to carry on the negotiations.

The party of resistance opposed the terms of settlement. The emperor made very small concessions which Baji Rao would not accept; Baji Rao increased his demands which the emperor would not grant.¹⁰⁰ The Nizam from the south advised the emperor not to meet Baji Rao or to concede his demands. The emperor was in a fix and wavered. He offered the deputy governorship of Malwa to Baji Rao under Jai Singh, with jagir and *mansab*, but refused the other pro-

⁹⁷ SPD, XIV, 50, 51, 55, 56.

⁹⁸ SPD, XXX, 321.

¹⁰⁰ SPD, XV, 86.

posals (29 September 1736). Baji Rao's agents, on the other hand, put forward an imposing list of demands: the governorship of Malwa and the jagir of that province; the forts of Mandu, Dhar and Raisin; the holy places of Allahabad, Banaras, Gaya and Mathura; the office of sardeshpande of the Deccan; a jagir of 50 lakhs in the Deccan; the jagir of all territory south of the Chambal; and an assignment of 50 lakhs on the revenues of Bengal. Between niggardly concessions on one side and excessive demands on the other no compromise was possible. The emperor, therefore, accepted the advice of the party of resistance. Hence hostilities became inevitable.

As the negotiations failed Baji Rao marched to Malwa in November 1736 with 50,000 horse.¹⁰¹ He secured complete control over Malwa. Yar Muhammad Ruhela of Bhopal was forced to pay 5 lakhs in December 1736. Then he moved to Bundelkhand. There he overpowered the chiefs of Orchha, Datia and Narwar who were against the Marathas. He compelled the raja of Bhadawar to pay 20 lakhs in February 1737.

Meanwhile the decadent empire had been mobilising its resources. Four imperial armies marched to meet Baji Rao: one of Khan Dauran, the second of Qamr-ud-din, the third of Abhai Singh, and the fourth of Saadat Khan of Avadh. The theatre of war extended from Delhi to the Narmada and from the Ganges to the Jamuna. Baji Rao's aim was to prevent the junction of the four armies. He would not allow the Delhi armies from the north to join the armies of Saadat Khan from the east at Agra, and he would prevent the Nizam from rendering assistance from the south. Chimmaji was posted in Khandesh to watch the Nizam and to prevent him from rendering any help. Holkar's small contingent was to operate against Saadat Khan's forces. Baji Rao's main forces were to meet the imperialists coming from the north and west.

On 1 March 1737 Holkar's forces crossed the Jamuna to attack the raja of Bhadawar.¹⁰² They were, however, defeated at Jaleswar on 12 March by Saadat Khan's forces. Holkar retreated and joined Baji Rao near Gwalior on 22 March. After the defeat of Holkar's small detachment Saadat Khan wrote to Khan Dauran about his glorious victory, boasting that Baji Rao's main army was defeated and dispersed, that he had fled beyond the Chambal, and that it was not necessary to honour his envoy who should be dismissed forthwith. He also forwarded a similar account to the emperor, and started for Agra to meet the other imperial commanders. He reached

¹⁰¹ SPD, XV, 5, 18, 23, 29, 33, 47; XIV, 45; XVII, 331, 339, 341; XXX, 333.

¹⁰² SPD, XV, 17-28, 47; XXX, 198, 364, 366. *Kavyeitihasa, Samgraha*, Pilaji Jadhav's letter, 60-71.

Agra on 16 March and joined the imperial forces under Khan Dauran and Qamr-ud-din at Mathura on 23 March. Baji Rao could not prevent this junction of imperial forces as he had no good artillery. He withdrew from the zone of war, creating a belief that the imperialists had defeated the Marathas. The imperialists remained inactive in the fond belief that they had won a great success.

To Baji Rao on this critical occasion there were two courses open. One was to fight against the united imperial forces. The other was to march on Delhi by eluding the imperialists. The first course could not be adopted as Saadat Khan did not come out of Agra to fight in the open. Baji Rao could not adopt the plan of besieging Agra as he had no artillery and he would not have been able to cut off supplies to his enemy in that part of the country. So he adopted the second course, i.e. attack on Delhi. It was an adventurous and hazardous course.¹⁰³ There were difficulties of route, supplies and support in a hostile country. There was the danger of the imperialists barring his advance, pursuing his forces and cutting off his retreat. But Baji Rao did not hesitate. He wrote to Chimmaji: "Hearing this (Saadat Khan's boast) I was resolved to let the emperor know the truth, to prove that I was still in Hindustan and to show him the Marathas at the gate of the capital."

Leaving his heavy luggage in Bundelkhand, gathering only a picked body of horsemen, and eluding his opponents, the peshwa made forced marches, covering 40 miles a day. He passed by an unfrequented route through the hilly country of the Jats and the Mewatis and reached Delhi on 29 March 1737. He was accompanied by Holkar and Sindhia. He informed the emperor of his arrival. He encamped a few miles away from the walls of Delhi. After some minor looting near the city he defeated a force of about 8,000 horse led from the city.¹⁰⁴

Baji Rao's presence created a great panic in the capital. The court and the people feared that a sack of Delhi would follow. But Baji Rao's aim was to demonstrate his power and to put pressure for the purpose of having his demands conceded by the emperor. He had deliberately encamped away from the city instead of threatening it. On 31 March he withdrew after receiving a commission appointing him to the governorship of Malwa and a promise of an annual subvention of 13 lakhs. The imperial commanders at Agra were surprised when they heard of Baji Rao's presence near Delhi. They immediately left for Delhi while Baji Rao marched towards

¹⁰³ *Brahmendra Swami Charitra*, Appendix 27.

¹⁰⁴ SPD, XV, 22, 27, 37, 47; *Brahmendra Swami Charitra*, Appendix 27.

Gwalior. The two parties did not meet and there was no engagement between them.

Marching unopposed through Rajputana Baji Rao entered Bundelkhand, collected his heavy baggage and the remaining forces, and reached Poona on 6 July 1737.¹⁰⁵ His dashing attack on Delhi was a supreme feat of military genius and daring. It created a permanent impression in the north about the strength and resourcefulness of the Marathas. The Rajputs became favourable to the Marathas. The party of opposition at the imperial court was temporarily overawed. The emperor sought Maratha aid at the time of Nadir Shah's invasion. Baji Rao's position in home politics was strengthened. He proved himself to be an able and resourceful chief minister of the rising Maratha empire.

NIZAM'S DEFEAT AT BHOPAL

The Nizam having heard of Baji Rao's daring march and great success, felt anxious about his own position in the south. He had advised the emperor not to grant Baji Rao's demands.¹⁰⁶ He was afraid of the emperor's conciliating the Marathas. He was anxious to prevent any agreement between Baji Rao and the emperor lest it should lead to his loss of the Deccan viceroyalty. Baji Rao he knew, had asked for the office of sardeshbande of the whole of the Deccan and the right to be consulted in the appointment of the viceroy of the Deccan. He had anticipated Baji Rao's defeat under the joint pressure of the imperial forces from the north and his own forces from the south. He was making military preparations for this purpose and was instigating the party of opposition in Deccan not to yield, assuring them of his own assistance. When Baji Rao had left for the northern campaign in October 1736 the Nizam had moved from Aurangabad and encamped at Burhanpur till 7 April 1737. But instead of going to the help of the imperialists in the north he merely watched the course of events. Now that Baji Rao was successful and on his way to the south he adopted a double policy, one to keep on seemingly good terms with the Marathas and the other to mature his plans secretly for defeating them with the help and under the authority of the emperor, who had sent a messenger, after Baji Rao's withdrawal, inviting him to Delhi.

In pursuance of this dual policy the Nizam¹⁰⁷ crossed the Narmada on 10 April 1737, and encamped at Sironj till 29 May. Baji Rao,

¹⁰⁵ SPD, XV, 23, 30, 38, 42, XXX, 186, 210.

¹⁰⁶ SPD, X, 93, XIV, 13, XV, 86, 17, 22, 25, 27.

¹⁰⁷ SPD, X, 35, XIV, 45, 59, 60, XV, 25-27, 33, 39, 42-49, 53. *Brahmendra Suami Charitra*, Appendix 131. Irvine, *Later Mughals*, II, 300.

while returning to the south, was anxious to gauge his intentions and to understand his moves. He sent Pilaji Jadhav to visit the Nizam at Sironj, where they met on 28 May. The meeting was very cordial. The Nizam gave out that he was going to Delhi to do homage to the emperor as he had not gone there after his rebellion of 1724 and his pardon by the emperor and the sanction of his viceroyalty of the Deccan in 1725. He reached Delhi towards the end of June and met the emperor on 3 July.

Baji Rao along with Holkar, Sindhia and Pilaji Jadhav reached Poona on 6 July. He had hoped for an early settlement of his claims about the cession of Malwa and other demands. But the Nizam's presence at the imperial capital strengthened the war party and frustrated the settlement. The emperor honoured the Nizam and conferred on him the title of Asaf Jah. The Nizam asked for the governorship of five provinces in the north and one crore of rupees as subsidy and promised to crush the Marathas. He was able to secure full control over the emperor and his government. His aim was now to rule in the name of the emperor both the north and the south. Baji Rao was not unaware of the Nizam's secret intentions. Both of them kept up the appearance of friendship, but each watched the other. They were near each other in Malwa during the month of May 1737 before Baji Rao left for Poona and the Nizam for Delhi.

The Nizam left Delhi in October 1737 for Malwa to drive away the Marathas. He had 30,000 troops, good artillery, 60 lakhs of rupees, and full authority to deal with the situation.¹⁰⁸ He was looked upon as a saviour at Delhi. The governorships of Agra and Malwa were granted to his eldest son Ghazi-ud-din. The negotiations with the Marathas had already been broken off. On 12 November he encamped at Dhamuni in Bundelkhand. The forces of Saadat Khan and a number of chiefs of Bundelkhand and Rajputana joined him. Thus strengthened, the Nizam reached Bhopal in early December, proceeding by the Sironj route. Nasir Jang, his second son and deputy in the Deccan, was expected to join him with sufficient forces. But this did not happen. Starting from Aurangabad on 15 December Nasir Jang reached Burhanpur but did not reach the Narmada till the Nizam was caught in the battle with the Marathas. Chimnai¹⁰⁹, who was watching him on the borders of Berar and Khandesh near the river Tapti, attacked him from behind. Shujaat Khan of Elichpur was defeated by Raghuji

¹⁰⁸ SPD. XV, 59, 53-59; XXX, 207.

¹⁰⁹ SPD. XXX, 207.

Bhonsle¹¹⁰ on 26 December. The Nizam's Berar force was thus destroyed practically simultaneously with his own defeat at Bhopal.

Meanwhile Baji Rao had left for the north on 25 October 1737 with 80,000 troops.¹¹¹ At that time Holkar, Sindhia, Pilaji Jadhav, the Pawars and other sardars had gathered at Poona. They settled the plan of campaign against the Nizam. Crossing the Narimada without effective obstruction from Nasir Jang, the peshwa brought his army into contact with the Nizam's forces near Bhopal in December. Here his masterly tactics and strategic manoeuvres succeeded. The Nizam¹¹² retreated and had to take shelter in the fortress of Bhopal. He was besieged and his supplies were cut off. His artillery proved of no value. A number of skirmishes took place and many soldiers were killed. The Nizam called for help from Delhi, but it did not come. The condition of his forces rapidly deteriorated. It was a three-week battle. The Nizam sued for peace and on 7 January 1738 signed the convention of Duraha-Sarai.

The terms were very favourable to the Marathas. The Nizam agreed to cede the whole of Malwa to the peshwa with complete sovereignty over the territory between the Narimada and the Chambal. He also promised to obtain confirmation of these terms and a sum of 50 lakhs from the emperor. After this the Nizam sent the nobles, landholders and rajas of Malwa and Bundelkhand to pay respect to Baji Rao.¹¹³ They waited on him and offered tribute. Thus the Nizam accepted the Maratha domination in Malwa. The province was now lost to the Mughal empire. The Nizam left for Delhi and reached there in April 1738. Baji Rao could not completely destroy the Nizam's power as he possessed good artillery and as a number of Rajput and Bundela rajas helped him at that time. Baji Rao stayed at Bhopal for two weeks. He then punished the pro-Nizam rulers of Kotah, Datta and Orchha by plundering their districts and exacting tribute. He returned to Poona on 15 July 1738, as the Bassein affair demanded his attention.

CONQUEST OF BASSEIN

Portuguese rule in India had been a complete failure. Its religious fanaticism and atrocities, its forcible conversions and persecutions, its political despotism and maritime tyranny left a legacy of hatred amongst the coastal Maratha population. The Portuguese often plundered, ravaged and burnt their villages, persecuted their religion,

¹¹⁰ SPD, XV, 82.

¹¹¹ *Brahmendra Swami Charitra*, Appendix 33, 134, SPD, XV, 56-60.

¹¹² SPD, XX, 18, Bajwade VI, 117, *Brahmendra Swami Charitra* Appendix 33-34.

¹¹³ SPD, XV, 68, 69, XXII, 365, 380, *Brahmendra Swami Charitra*, Appendix 33-37, 116, 136.

and destroyed their temples. All the local chronicles bear ample testimony to their misrule and intolerance. The Portuguese had established their factories and their political authority from Daman to Goa on the Maratha coast. The capital of their northern province was Bassein; of the southern province, Goa. They compelled all ships to take their permits while sailing on the sea and to pay dues in their harbours. To expel them from the Maratha country was the aim of Shivaji and his successors. But due to their weakness in navy and artillery they did not succeed in this task. On land, however, the Portuguese were often defeated. A number of their forts and places were captured by Shivaji and Sambhaji. Kanhoji Angria had reduced their dominance in Maratha coastal waters. But they still continued to hold important portions of their territory in the north and the south. They also helped the enemies of the Marathas like the Sidis and the English in their hostilities or quarrels with the Maratha state.

The Portuguese had established themselves in the island of Salsette near Bombay in 1534. Their rule was despotic and intolerant. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries they had become demoralized. Their administration was corrupt. They treated the Hindu population harshly. They confiscated their *watans* and forced whole villages to accept conversion to Christianity at the point of the sword. They did not allow them to practise their religious rites and social ceremonies. They destroyed their temples and built churches. They drove Brahmin priests out of their territories. Their inquisition committed murders in the name of religious justice.

The Maratha plan for capturing Salsette¹¹⁴ was conceived as early as 1719. On 5 August 1719 the Marathas took Kalyan and Bhiwandi and deignaded *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* from the Portuguese. The growth of the Maratha power created a hope of liberation amongst the Hindu population of these areas. After the capture of Kalyan and Bhiwandi they became bold, vocal, and active. They invited the peshwa in the name of religion and patriotism to liberate them from foreign rule and religious tyranny. The leaders in this movement were the Naiks of Anjur. They had already appealed to Kanhoji Angria and Khande Rao Dabhade for help and deliverance. After the success of Kanhoji and Baji Rao over the Portuguese and the English in the naval battle at Kolaba the Portuguese made a separate treaty with the Marathas on 9 January 1722. Gangaji Naik of Anjur persuaded Baji Rao in 1722 to undertake the conquest of Salsette. Pilaji Jadhav plundered the Bassein province on 15 November 1723. But on 10 January 1724 the old treaty of 1722 was re-

¹¹⁴ *Sasthichi Bakhar*, SPD, XXX, 208, 339; XXXIV, 92, 202. Rajwade, II, p. 38.

affirmed.¹¹⁵ In 1728 Pilaji Jadhav looted two villages in the Daman area. The Portuguese attacked Kalyan. In May 1730 Pilaji again invaded the Bassein province and captured Kamba, a Portuguese outpost.¹¹⁶ The English, however, saved the Portuguese. In 1731 the Portuguese invaded Maratha territory, but were driven back. On 30 January 1732 a treaty was made between the Portuguese and the Marathas.¹¹⁷ It maintained the *status quo*. The Marathas had asked for permission for the Hindus to build temples, but it was not granted. In 1734 the Portuguese began to fortify Thana. Bassein was also fortified.¹¹⁸ They levied heavy taxes on the people and exacted forced labour. The inhabitants of Salsette sent urgent invitations to the peshwa to come and capture the island. Seeing that the fortifications were being completed, Baji Rao started a campaign against the Portuguese in Salsette in March 1737. Chimmaji was appointed the chief commander.

Chimmaji captured Thana fort on 27 March; he also occupied some other places in the island.¹¹⁹ Thana was the southern entrance into the island. One Maratha force entered Salsette. The other force marched to capture Bassein which was the northern gate of Salsette; but the first attack was not successful (5 May 1737). The Portuguese possessed better artillery and silenced the Maratha batteries every time they attacked. The second attack on Bassein was made by Gangaji Naik and others with 4,000 troops in full rains on 28 June 1737, but they had to withdraw with great loss. A third attack was made on 4 September 1737, but again they had to retreat. The Marathas besieged Mahim in the Bassein district from October to December 1737, but they had to give the siege up. Assaults on other places like Shirgaon, Tarapur and Asheri during the period October to December were also not successful. In February 1738 a Maratha garrison at Dharavi was crushed. Thus the Maratha campaign of 1737-38 failed. The Portuguese counter-offensive was becoming successful. They had received help from Goa, Portugal, the Sidis and the English.

Chimmaji was engaged in Baji Rao's struggle against the Nizam. After the defeat of the Nizam Chimmaji reached Thana in February 1738, but his failing health compelled him to go back to Poona in May. Baji Rao also reached there at that time. There they planned

¹¹⁵ Rajwade, VI, 26, 101, 102, SPD XXXX, 5.

¹¹⁶ SPD, XXX, 67; *Sastichi Bakhar*, 26.

¹¹⁷ Danvers, *The Portuguese in the East*, 296, 397. Forrest, *Selections, Home Series*, 48.

¹¹⁸ SPD, XXX, 457, 459; XIV, 6, 11, 13, 14, 17, 24, 25, 31.

¹¹⁹ SPD, XXXIV, 1, 2; *Brahmendra Swami Charitra*, 69.

the campaign of Bassein. There were constant fights and skirmishes between the Marathas and the Portuguese from June to November. Pedro de Mello, who had brought relief to Bassein from Goa with two shiploads of troops, conceived the plan of recapturing the fort of Thana which the Marathas had taken in 1737¹²⁰ and thus cutting off their forces from the mainland. He was, however, killed in action at Thana on 27 November 1738.¹²¹

The second campaign¹²² of Chinnaji against Bassein started in December 1738 and lasted till May 1739. He reached the Konkan on 23 December and then captured, one after another, Mahim, Kelve, Shirgaon, Tarapur, Asheri, Vesava and other places in the northern province between January and March 1739. The island of Salsette is separated from the mainland by a long narrow creek. Bassein is at the northern end of the creek and Thana at the southern end. Along the coast were a number of fortified places. Bassein was a well-fortified citadel equipped with good European artillery, troops and commanders. The Marathas had no navy worth the name to attack from the western sea-side. The eastern side was marshy. On the southern side there were the creek and the river. It was only approachable from the northern side. Here the ground was sandy and without any shelter or vegetation of any kind. The Marathas did not possess good artillery capable of destroying the fort defences. The enemy had entrenched himself in it and would not come out and offer battle. The fort had access to the sea on the west. The Portuguese ships came and went freely and brought help and relief to the garrison. They also got help in arms and ammunition from the Sidis and the English, and even from Sambhaji Angria. The Marathas tried to blockade the sea and escalate the fort, but did not succeed.¹²³

After the defeat of the Nizam at Bhopal large Maratha forces were available, and Chinnaji took most of the important places in the northern province. Hence no revenue came to Bassein and its treasury became empty. Chinnaji had planned his campaign both in the northern and southern provinces so as to prevent any aid in ships, resources, men and money from reaching Bassein. In the north Ranoji Sindhia laid the Darnan area under fire and sword. In the south Vyankat Rao Ghorpade attacked Goa from 12 January 1739, and captured Madgaon on 15 January. The whole of the

120 SPD, XVI, 8, 13, 41; XXII, 348-50.

121 SPD, XXII, 119, 348-50, 367; XXX, p. 316. *Brahmendia Siwami Charitra* Appendix 69 pp. 71-79. *Sashtichti Bakhār*.

122 Rajwade, VI, 18, 114-18.

123 SPD, XXII, 350, 121; XXX, p. 349. *Sashtichti Bakhār*.

Salsette province near Goa fell into Maratha hands. The fort of Phonda was also captured. Chimmaji had marched into Salsette and Bassein area with a good artillery and by capturing surrounding places had isolated Bassein. The northern province was in Maratha hands by April 1739. Goa was threatened. The Portuguese there were compelled to agree to a treaty with Ghorpade on 27 April 1739. The English did not send any help. The Sidis were defeated.

The final assault on Bassein was delivered on 1 May 1739. The wall was breached from the north. There were Malhar Rao Holkar, Ranoji Sindhia, Manaji Angria, along with Chimmaji. A mine was sprung under one of the bastions. Eleven times the Maratha columns moved to the assault and eleven times they were repelled with slaughter. On 2 May a terrific explosion blew up the towers, and the Marathas after severe fighting established themselves among the ruins from which they could fire on the defence. Chimmaji silenced the Portuguese guns.¹²⁴ Nearly 4,500 shells had been fired into the fort during the siege. The Portuguese could not continue the fight; they surrendered on 4 May 1739.

Chimmaji offered them very generous terms. A treaty was concluded on 5 May 1739. Safe conduct was offered to the Portuguese troops. They were given complete religious freedom. The oppression of two centuries in that area ended once for all. The Marathas gained the whole of the northern province, 75 miles long. It included four chief ports, 340 villages, 8 cities, 20 fortresses and 2 fortified hills. The revenues amounted to 2,50,000 rupees. Bassein came into Maratha possession on 12 May 1739. The Maratha flag was planted there on 23 May 1739. It was one of the greatest victories of the Marathas against a European power. It showed Maratha bravery, tenacity and military fibre and skill, in spite of their want of up-to-date arms and ammunition. There was unity of command under Chimmaji's leadership. All the commanders and soldiers showed great zeal, energy and spirit which were unrivalled at the time.

The great Maratha success made the English anxious about the safety of their own possessions and the security of their trade. They sent one Captain Inchbird to Chimmaji at Bassein in June 1739 to negotiate a treaty with Baji Rao. They had helped the Portuguese in this war against the Marathas. Chimmaji accused them of providing ammunition to the Portuguese, of seeing Shahu directly, and of fomenting differences between Shahu and Baji Rao. One Captain Gordon had been sent to Shahu on 12 May 1739 for gathering in-

¹²⁴ *Brahmendra Swami Charita*. Appendix 52. Forrest. Selections. Maratha Series, 30, 31, 36-41, 78. SPD. XXII, p. 72. *Purandare Daftari*, I, 185-38.

formation about Maratha affairs as well as for creating prejudice against Baji Rao in the mind of the king. He met Shahu on 8 June, but Shahu directed him to see Baji Rao as he was the chief minister. Disappointed by the king's reaction, Gordon returned to Bombay on 30 June.

NADIR SHAH'S INVASION

Nadir Shah's invasion took place a few months before the fall of Bassein. It gave a powerful blow to the Mughal empire from which it never recovered. It had some indirect effect on Maratha politics. The emperor, Muhammad Shah, had invited some of the princes, chiefs, governors of the empire as also independent powers like the Marathas to join him against the invader.¹²⁵ Shahu was in favour of rendering immediate help. He wanted not only to maintain his promise of helping the emperor in times of peril but was against the destruction of his authority. His letter of 31 May 1739 to Baji Rao clearly explains his policy. He ordered Baji Rao to go to the emperor's assistance. Baji Rao realized the danger which Nadir Shah's success would mean for the Maratha power and its aims. He wanted all Hindu and Muslim chiefs to fight against the foreign invader. In one of his letters he says: 'Our domestic quarrels are now insignificant. There is now but one enemy in Hindustan Hindu and Mussalman, the whole power in the Deccan must assemble, and I shall spread our Marathas from the Narmada to the Chambal.'¹²⁶ During the invasion there were proposals for an alliance between the Marathas and the Rajputs and for raising the maharana of Udaipur to the throne of Hastinapur.

Many looked to Baji Rao for expelling the invader. The peshwa left for the north on 3 February 1739, and encamped at Burhanpur. He did not have adequate forces and artillery to march and meet the invader immediately. Large Maratha forces were at the time engaged in the Bassein campaign. The Nizam's southern forces under Nasir Jang never made or intended to make a move against Nadir Shah. The imperialist Rajputs, Bundelas and Ruhelas did not stir out. Baji Rao's military weakness forced on him a limited objective; he thought of opposing Nadir Shah if he crossed the Chambal. But the contingency did not arise; the invader left Delhi on his homeward journey on 5 May.

¹²⁵ Rajwade VI 130.

¹²⁶ Rajwade VI, 130; SPD, XV, 72, 75; XVII, 72; XXX, 222; *Satara Historical Records*, II, 218; *Brahmendra Swami Charitra*, 117-20.

TREATY WITH NASIR JANG

After the departure of Nadir Shah Baji Rao returned to Poona on 27 July 1739. He had sent a letter¹²⁷ of congratulations and presents to the emperor after his reinstallation on the throne by the invader's grace. The emperor agreed to observe all the old agreements with the Marathas and to grant a jagir and *mansab* to Baji Rao. But the Nizam, who now controlled the Delhi court and politics, evaded carrying out the terms of the Duraha-Sarai convention and earlier agreements. Baji Rao had therefore no other course left open but to use force. He established amicable relations with the Rajputs and the Bundelis and thus strengthened his position.

Nasir Jang the second son of the Nizam, was the deputy governor of the Deccan from 17 April 1737. While the Nizam was in Delhi and the imperial capital was under the shadow of Nadir Shah's invasion he was trying to establish his personal authority in the Deccan and preparing to fight the Marathas who were encroaching on his territory.¹²⁸ During his halt at Buthanpur Baji Rao was watching Nasir Jang's movements, and also negotiating with him for the fulfilment of his claims under the existing treaties. But Nasir Jang did not agree; he obstructed the Marathas and prepared for war. The Bassem campaign was now over. Chimmaji and other leading sardars had returned. Baji Rao was now free to start against Nasir Jang (November 1739).¹²⁹ On 12 December he left Poona and went to Ahmadnagar where Chimmaji joined him. From there he marched against Nasir Jang who was then at Aurangabad. Fighting commenced there about 17 January 1740, negotiations with Nasir Jang having failed. It was a running battle of pursuit by Baji Rao along the banks of the Godavari from Aurangabad to Shahgarh, where Nasir Jang crossed to the other side. The Maratha forces under Fateh Singh and Raghunath Bhonsle defeated his associates in the south. He himself was pressed hard by Baji Rao's forces and was thus compelled to negotiate and come to terms.¹³⁰ There was no truth in the contemporary Madras rumour that Baji Rao was defeated. An English letter¹³¹ of 1740 from Bombay and Chimmaji's letter of 8 March contradict this rumour and mention Baji Rao's success. By the treaty of Muori Paithan concluded on 7 March 1740, both sides pledged themselves to maintain peace and to refrain from

¹²⁷ SPD, XXII, 148.

¹²⁸ SPD, XVII, 95.

¹²⁹ SPD, XV, 71, XXX, 233, 247. Rajwade, VI, p. 28.

¹³⁰ *Purandare Dastar*, I, 138-44. SPD, XXII, 144; XV, 84, 85; IX, 33, 37. Rajwade, II, p. 87. *Brahmendra Swami Charita* Appendix 55.

¹³¹ *Surat Diaries and Consultations*, 18 February 1740.

ravaging each other's territories. Moreover, Handia and Khargaon districts on the banks of the Narmada were conferred on Baji Rao as *jagir*. Soon after the treaty Baji Rao started for the north. He however got ill and died at Raverkhedi on the Narmada on 28 April 1740 at the age of forty.¹³² His great task—the final defeat of the Nizam and the liberation of the Deccan—remained incomplete.

ESTIMATE OF BAJI RAO

Tall and commanding, Baji Rao was handsome in appearance. He was a great general, a daring statesman with a new outlook, and a loyal minister. He understood the fundamental needs of the rising Maratha state and knew the real enemies who threatened it. He strengthened and extended the state and reduced its enemies, such as the Nizam on the east and the Portuguese and the Sidis, who had been the terror of the west. His exploits in war and diplomacy made the Marathas empire-builders in succession to the Mughals. It was a century of political revolutions in India. It was a period of revolt against the Mughals. History records the great fact of a defeated and apparently shattered people rising as if from the dust and facing the greatest Indian power on terms of equality and even dominance, and winning from the humiliated victors of the long war of 1682-1707 almost every one of their national demands. Under Baji Rao's leadership the Marathas did more than win back their heritage they established their political authority in central and western India and inaugurated a new political order. This was no mean achievement for the first two peshwas.

If Baji Rao did not succeed in creating a strongly knit empire, a centralized administration immune from feudal weakness and a modernized army with effective artillery, it should be remembered that he had to carry on his work under crippling limitations. He was restrained by his subordinate position, limited resources and controlled powers. His full success depended on the aims and policy of the ruler whose chief minister he was, and on the strength of the administrative system which had been evolved. The ruler was not strong; the state structure was feudal and loosely organized. The sardars and ministers were hereditary, separatist and self-seeking. The peshwa was not their master; he was only one of them, and the central power was not concentrated in him. Despite his weakness of character Shahu was often interfering and assertive.¹³³ The method of assignment of *mokasa* increased the power of the *saranjam*-holders who became too strong to be put down or brought to obe-

¹³² SPD, XXII, p. 89.

¹³³ SPD, III, 23; XVII, 28.

dience. Weakened by the lack of full support from the king and by opposition from his other ministers and officers, Baji Rao had other difficulties such as chronic want of money and of good artillery. Shahu's government was financially not well-organized. The armies had to live on their own collections and exactions. The Marathas proved deficient in evolving a good financial system. Traditional confidence in the cavalry prevented them from developing a powerful artillery. Hereditary interest stood in the way of organizing an efficient standing army directly controlled by the central government. Baji Rao could not adopt a strong policy and effective measures against the enemies of the state, because Shahu was against the destruction of the Mughal empire,¹³⁴ the Nizam, the Portuguese, and even the Sidis; he was also against the reduction of his over-powerful and disloyal sardars. The peshwa was not given a free hand either in the formulation of policy or in the organization of the state. Deep Singh, the envoy of Sawai Jai Singh, who visited Shahu and the Nizam in 1730 and studied closely the contemporary polities and personalities in the Deccan, describes Baji Rao as the only true statesman and leader amongst the Marathas, and as a man of high character, true of his word, trusted by his sovereign, loved by his troops and capable of shouldering heavy responsibilities.¹³⁵

¹³⁴ SPD, X, 75.

¹³⁵ SPD, III, 112, 123, 129, 135; X, 31, 59, 60, 66-76; XIV, 9; XXX, 73, 78, XI, 23; XVII, 47, 52, 60, 67, 68 XXXIII, 207, 254, XXX, 73, 78. *Brahmendra Swami Charitra*, 76-77.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

MARATHA EXPANSION UNDER BALAJI BAJI RAO

SUCCESSION

Baji Rao died on 25 April 1740, and nearly two months later, on 25 June, the eldest of his sons, Balaji Baji Rao, popularly called Nana Saheb, was invested with the office of the peshwa by king Shahu at Satara¹. The peshwa was rather young, nearly twenty, having been born on 12 December 1721. There was a strong party headed by Raghujir Bhonsle of Nagpur opposed to his appointment. Yet Shahu appointed him because he had no doubt about his ability. Shahu was a shrewd judge of human character, and he had been watching Nana Saheb from his early age of twelve, when he was associated at the court with his uncle Chinnajir Appa. Besides, Nana Saheb had an amiable disposition unlike his father's, and Shahu liked him. But Shahu apprehended that the young peshwa might not look the master in the eyes of the old and experienced officers of the state, and they might trifle with his authority and withhold co-operation. To make matters easy for Nana Saheb he got together all the principal nobles and officers of the state and made them take an oath touching his feet that they would forgive the omissions and commissions of the young peshwa and co-operate with him in the government². That step damped the spirit of the dissenters, and Nana Saheb was thus enabled to cross the first hurdles at the start of his career. Immediately after Shahu gave him certain directions in regard to the future policy of his government, the substance of which could be conveyed in some such words as the following: "After Balaji Pant the elder Baji Rao achieved great deeds in the devoted service of the king. At length he started to crush the Iransis and establish an empire. But his life was cut short. You are his son, and you ought

¹ Rujwade IV, pp. 170 ff. (*Peshwanchi Samshuvah*).

² *Shri Shahu Maharaj Yanchi Bakhar* (*Bharatavarsha* February and March, 1900, p. 77).

to consummate his policy of conquering the whole of Hindustan and establish an empire, and lead your horse beyond Attock."³

These directions indicate the motive of Shahu in appointing Nana Saheb as his peshwa. Since the policy of Maratha expansion as initiated by Baji Rao had assumed gigantic proportions by the time of his death, it should reach its consummation in the shape of a vast Maratha empire under Balaji Baji Rao. If that was the ambition of Shahu, rightly did he anticipate that the son of Baji Rao and grandson of Balaji Vishwanath was eminently fitted to pursue this policy, on the success of which depended the glory of his house. Considerations of political expediency also postulated a continuity in the policy and directions of government. Since Chimnaji Appa was living Shahu felt little hesitation in choosing Nana Saheb in spite of his young age.

AGREEMENT WITH SAMBHAJI

His investiture over, Balaji Baji Rao with the approval of Chimnaji Appa entered into an agreement with Sambhaji of Kolhapur to recognize the latter as successor to the throne after the death of Shahu who was childless. It was this question of succession which had interested Raghaji in the matter of appointment to the office of the peshwa. He desired his own son to be adopted by Shahu, with whom he was connected by marriage, his wife being the sister of one of Shahu's queens. For that purpose he wanted a partisan of his to be the peshwa. This is why he had supported a banker named Babuji Naik Joshi for that office. But these designs upset Sambhaji of Kolhapur, who threw in his weight on the side of Nana Saheb. As Raghaji went away disappointed to resume his Karnatak campaign, and took away Babuji Naik with him, the field was clear for Nana Saheb and Sambhaji to come to an agreement, all unknown to Shahu. This arrangement about succession was by far the best that could have been thought of under the circumstances. Had it materialized, the division of Maharashtra into the Satara and Kolhapur kingdoms would not have proved to be permanent, and all unpleasantness and evil consequences of Ram Raja's succession to the throne might have been avoided. Probably there would have been, with Sambhaji as king, a healthy check on the power and ambition of the peshwas, and therefore a balance among the constituent elements of the Maratha confederacy.

³ Thorle Shahu Maharaj Yanchi Charitra, 77-78.

FINANCIAL PROBLEM

One other problem that engaged the attention of the peshwa at this time was that of finance. The extensive campaigns of Baji Rao had, contrary to his anticipation, added to the financial burden of the state, which had come to the verge of bankruptcy. Baji Rao had borrowed enormous amounts of money from his brother-in-law Babuji Naik, and since they had not been paid he was egged on by Raghujī to claim the peshwaship. Nana Saheb was, however, relieved of the annoying pressure of his father's creditor by the influence and credit of his diwan, Mahadji Purandare. Speedy arrangements were made for an annual contribution of Rs 20,000 to be paid from Arcot revenues by Murar Rao Ghorpade who was posted at Trichinopoly, and Shahu was persuaded to grant the revenues of all the country north of the Narmada except Gujarat.⁴

Balaji Baji Rao's early interest in finance was not eclipsed in later years by the grave political and military problems which claimed his attention. As Sardesai says, "Control over the finances was perhaps the special feature of Balajirao's administrative capacity. In the policy of increasing the resources of the State and utilising them to the highest advantage, this Peshwa attained remarkable success. He noticed the weakness of his father's position on account of his embarrassing debts and always kept himself above dire want ever exercising careful supervision over all financial transactions."⁵

As he became comparatively free from the financial embarrassments, Nana Saheb started to implement the injunctions of the king regarding the policy of expansion. He discussed the affairs of northern India with Sindhia, Holkar, Pilaji Jadhav and Mahadeo Hingne, the Maratha agent in Delhi, all of whom had been called to Poona. Nizam-ul-mulk Asaf Jah had deliberately delayed the fulfilment of the treaty of Duraha-Sarai, and the grant of Malwa and Bundel khand had not been secured from the emperor.⁶ It was, therefore, decided that the Nizam should be persuaded to procure imperial farmans for those territories, failing that Sawai Jai Singh's intervention should be sought for the purpose. Further, Baji Rao's policy of expansion should be vigorously pursued.

Shortly after these decisions were taken died Chinnaji Appa on 17 December 1740. It was a great blow to the best interests of the Maratha state. His good sense, tact in dealing with men and matters, and military ability were valuable assets to the family of the pesh-

⁴ Rajwade, II, p. 92.

⁵ *New History of the Marathas*, II, 193.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 90.

was. Had he lived longer many a difficulty of Nana Saheb would have been avoided, and perhaps some of his mistakes would not have been committed.

M A L W A , B U N D E L K H A N D A N D B E N G A L

Immediately after the obsequies were over Nana Saheb met Nizam-ul-mulk at Edalabad on the bank of the Purna in Khandesh on 7 January 1741, when the latter was on his way from Delhi to Hyderabad to crush the rebellion of his son Nasir Jang.⁷ Though the Nizam paid a sum of 15 lakhs to Nana Saheb in return for the aid of a Maratha contingent to be used against Nasir Jang, the peshwa did not get satisfactory replies from him regarding the fulfilment of the treaty of Duraha-Sarai. Hence the peshwa started for the north, entered Malwa in the early months of 1741, and met Sawai Jai Singh in May 1741 in a camp between Agra and Dholpur.⁸ It was mutually agreed that Jai Singh would procure within six months imperial firman for Malwa and for the right of levying contributions from the states north of the Chambal on which the Marathas had already imposed *chauth*; it was also decided that the peshwa and Jai Singh would help each other in times of need.⁹ After this meeting the peshwa returned to Poona in July and from there went to Satara.

The peshwa was very eager to occupy Bundelkhand owing to its geographical and strategical situation. A firm hold on Bundelkhand would facilitate his domination of the Doab and occupation of the holy places there which he, like his father, very much desired. Hence he could not stay at Poona or Satara for long, and started on his second expedition to the north in December 1741. Entering Malwa at the head of a vast army he turned south and occupied—in March and April 1742—Garha and Mandla on its borders to keep a watchful eye on the activities of Raghuji Bhonsle. From the borders of Raghuji's dominions he marched northward, established his authority in Ahirwada, Khichiwada and Bundelkhand, and spent the rest of the year 1742 in camp at Orchha. For the first time the Marathas spent the rainy season in camp away from home, and that indicates the nature of Maratha occupation of Bundelkhand which was becoming pretty secure by now.

Meanwhile the peshwa received an order from the emperor to go to the assistance of Alivardi Khan, nawab of Bengal, whose territories had been ravaged by the troops of Raghuji Bhonsle. Unable to

⁷ *Hingne Daftari*, I, 20. *Brahmendra Swami Charitra*, 60. SPD, XXVIII, 12.

⁸ SPD, XXI, 2. Rajwade, VI, 151. *Purandare Daftari*, I, 149.

⁹ Rajwade, II, p. 91.

stem the tide of Maratha invasion single-handed, the nawab had appealed for help to the emperor, who ordered Safdar Jang, the subahdar of Avadh, to go to his assistance. But instead of relieving Alivardi Khan of the Maratha pressure Safdar formed the design of fishing in troubled water. So the emperor had to ask the peshwa to undertake the task, and when he appeared on the scene Safdar Jang withdrew. The peshwa left Allahabad late in January 1743, and appeared near Murshidabad about the end of March. He met Alivardi on 31 March, and it was agreed that the latter would pay Shahu *chauth* for Bengal and 22 lakhs to the peshwa for the expenses of his expedition. The peshwa undertook the responsibility of restraining the ambition of Raghaji in the territories of Alivardi Khan. After this agreement the peshwa pursued Raghaji, overtook him, and in two engagements fought in April 1743 completely defeated him.¹⁰ Raghaji sued for peace, and agreed to abide by the peshwa's decisions pertaining to the affairs of the Maratha confederacy.

When the peshwa returned after completing the work assigned to him, the emperor had no excuse for withholding the grant of Malwa. The grant was drawn up in the name of prince Ahmad, the son of the emperor, and Balaji Baji Rao was nominated as his deputy. He was to maintain peace and order in Malwa, not to plunder or invade any other imperial subah, and to refrain from levying contributions from the territories north of the Chambal. The peshwa was to maintain at his own cost an army of 4,000 men for the service of the emperor, who, however, would have to bear the cost of additional troops if required by him. Ranoji Sindhia, Malhar Rao Holkar and Yawant Rao Pawar stood guarantee for the fulfilment of these conditions by the peshwa.¹¹

SETTLEMENT WITH BHONSLE

Hardly had these transactions been concluded when came the news of Shahu's illness, and Raghaji's departure for Satara. The peshwa had to hasten home in apprehension of Shahu's death to counteract the machinations of Raghaji, whose interest lay in getting his son accepted as Shahu's successor. When he arrived at Satara he found Shahu slowly recovering, and at his initiative Bhonsle and the peshwa came to an understanding with regard to their territorial claims. To the peshwa were assigned his original *mokasa* besides

¹⁰ Vad. *Diary of Nana Saheb*, II. *Akhibārūt*, translated by J. N. Sastri in *Journal of Bihar and Orissa Research Society*, December 1931. Rajwade, II, p. 94.

¹¹ SPD, XV, p. 88. Rajwade, II, pp. 95-96.

the jagirs conferred upon his father and grandfather; the governments of the Konkan and Malwa; the contributions from Allahabad, Agra, Ajmer, and three *taluqas* of the district of Patna in Bihar; and 20,000 rupees from the province of Arcot. Raghaji was allowed to collect contributions from Lucknow, Patna, lower Bengal, Bihar and the whole country between Berar and Cuttack. The southern and eastern boundaries of the peshwa's sphere of movement were defined by the lines of the three rivers: the Narmada, the Son, and the Ganges. Eastward of the Son the whole country was assigned to the sphere of Raghaji Bhonsle. Thus was the conflict of the rival claims settled by Shahu in August-September 1743.¹² But this settlement in the form of a demarcation of their spheres of activity accentuated the separatist tendency already in evidence among the members of the Maratha confederacy. Precedents like this created conditions favourable to the disintegration of the confederacy.

BUNDELKHAND AGAIN : CAPTURE OF BHILSA

For a year after his return to Poona the peshwa looked into the matters nearer home and on 20 November 1744 he started from Poona on his third expedition to the north. On entering Malwa he took Bhilsa early in March 1745.¹³ A little later the nawab of Bhopal entered into an engagement with his agent Pilaji Jadhav. From Bhilsa he passed into Bundelkhand where he learnt that his officer Naro Shankir had, owing to the implacable hostility of the Bundelas, shifted the headquarters of Maratha activities in Bundelkhand from Orchha to Jhansi. Nana Saheb spent some time there arranging the affairs of the province, and returned to Poona in August 1745. Jagatraj Bundela, after his stubborn resistance to Holkar and Sindhia, was conciliated by the restoration of Jaitpur¹⁴ which had been wrested from him, but the dependencies of Jaitpur were divided between Govind Ballal and Lakshman Shankar. With regard to Datia Nana Saheb ordered that Arjun Singh should be made its raja with Maratha help, but since Sindhia and Holkar did not succeed immediately in installing him, the peshwa sent Amrut Rao to the assistance of Arjun Singh.

KARNATAK AFFAIRS

Back at Poona, the peshwa planned an expedition to Karnatak. Since 1740 Karnatak had been passing through a period of trouble

12 *Pant Pradhan Yanchi Dusari Shakawali* (*Bharatavarsha*, July 1899).

13 SPD, XXI, 7.

14 *Ibid.* 14.

and turmoil; and unlike Baji Rao, Nana Saheb was not inclined to let it drift in its own way. Apart from the growing Anglo-French rivalry and the crumbling condition of the Mughal regime there due to the long absence of Nizam-ul-mulk at Delhi, there was constant strife among the local chieftains. It was a situation which the Maratha expansionists naturally sought to exploit. The principalities of Tanjore and Gutti supplied the most convenient bases for military operations and for the establishment of Maratha domination of the entire region.

Shahu himself took special interest in Karnatak affairs. In or about 1738 he assigned to Raghiji Bhonsle the management of the 'province of Karnatak extending southwards from the bank of the Tungabhadra'. The area in view covered Trichinopoly, Tanjore, Arcot (including Jinji) and 'such parts of Mysore as had been acquired after the last settlement with that state'. Raghiji was to retain one-half of the collections to meet the expenses of his army. Shahu in his own hand wrote to Raghiji, "Make success of this enterprise... I wholly rely on you."¹⁵

Accordingly, towards the end of 1739 an army 50,000 strong set out under Raghiji and Fatehsingh Bhonsle. Such an army had not visited the south since Shivaji's celebrated campaign, and it met with feeble opposition in its long march of 600 miles. The nawab of Kandanur was defeated and the nawab of Cudappah had to make a 'handsome present'.¹⁶ The real target of the expedition was the nawab of Arcot who was asked to pay 14 lakhs of rupees and to 'leave the fort and kingdom of Tanjore and put the lawful king in possession'. On the nawab's refusal to comply with these demands the Marathas advanced against him.¹⁷ In a battle at the Damal-cherry pass Dost Ali and one of his sons were killed and their army routed (9 May 1740). Arcot was plundered, Vellore besieged. Safdar Ali, another son of the deceased nawab, was compelled to buy peace by paying 12 lakhs immediately and 16 lakhs afterwards.

The next stage was the capture of Trichinopoly from Chanda Saheb who had seized the famous fort in 1736. He had several enemies: the Maratha raja of Tanjore, the raja of Mysore, and Safdar Ali, the new nawab of Arcot. The last-mentioned concluded a pact with the Marathas on 16 November 1740. Trichinopoly surrendered in March 1741. Chanda Saheb was carried away as a captive to

¹⁵ Aitihasik Patra Vyavahar, 26.

¹⁶ Country Correspondence, 1740, Public Department, 1740, letter no. 43.

¹⁷ Ibid, letter no. 31.

Satara.¹⁸ Trichinopoly was put in charge of Murar Rao Ghorpade of Gutti.

The campaign had ended gloriously for the Maratha arms and had raised the prestige of Raghaji Bhonsle, which the peshwa, of course, did not like. But after Raghaji's return home, his work in Karnataka was partly undone owing to the murder of nawab Safdar Ali by Murtaza Ali Khan, the governor of Vellore. When confusion and anarchy raised their head again, it bestirred the old viceroy of the Deccan (Nizam-ul-mulk), who had come to the Deccan some time before, and had, by now, suppressed the rebellion of his son Nasir Jang. Eager to stop the rot in Karnataka affairs, the old veteran started with a large army, recognized Satdar Ali's young son as the nawab of Arcot with Anwar-ud-din Khan as his guardian, reduced Murar Rao Gherpade of Gutti to submission, compelled him to surrender Trichinopoly, and having proclaimed Muzaffar Jang as the subahdar of Karnataka *Balaghat* left for his capital by October 1743.¹⁹

When Shahu came to know of these successes of the Nizam, he deputed Babuji Naik at his own request to lead an expedition to Karnataka, and in May 1745, assigned to him the subah of Karnataka with the right of collecting *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* from the country between the Krishna and the Tungabhadra.²⁰ In spite of the eagerness of Babuji Naik and earnestness of Shahu to see the expedition succeed, it failed miserably owing to the bad leadership of Babuji Naik, who returned covered with humiliation.

Now came the opportunity for the peshwa, who had meanwhile established his own position in the confederacy and earned some reputation by his expeditions in the north and the east and by the settlement of Maratha interests in those regions. So far as the south was concerned, he secured from Sambhaji in 1746 the assignment for management of Sunda, Bidnur, Savanur and Bankapur.²¹ After due preparation he appointed Sadashiv Rao Bhau to the supreme command, and associated him, due to his young age, with Mahadji Purandare and Sakharam Bapu. Son of Chimnaji, and trained carefully from boyhood, Sadashiv Rao, though only seventeen at this time, was a youth of great parts and promise. He defeated the nawab of Savanur from whom he wrested 36 *parganahs*, levied contributions from the country between the Krishna and the Tunga-bhadra, and in March 1747 defeated Nasir Jang in a pitched battle

18 *Ananda Ranga Pillai's Diary*, I, 161-62.

19 *Ibid.*, 212, 213, 235.

20 *Kavyeethas Patra Yadi Vagaire*, 47.

21 *Altithasik Patra Vyacahar*, 56.

at Mahadevour or Mayanhalli. He spent the rest of the year in Karnatak, returning to Poona by the end of 1747 or the beginning of 1748.²² This expedition had been planned by Nana Saheb to exclude his adversaries—Babuji Naik, who had returned discredited, and Raghaji Bhonsle, who had won considerable success—from a share in administration. It was an expensive adventure as Nana Saheb afterwards realized; and as little contact was made with the European powers, the determining factors in the affairs of the region were completely ignored.

COURT AFFAIRS

While the agents of the peshwa occupied Bundelkhand and his cousin invaded Karnatak his own attention was focused on affairs at the court of Satara. Shahu was fast sinking in health and the endless quarrels of his two queens, Sakwar Bai and Saguna Bai, combined with the court intrigues, completely upset his mental peace and happiness. As his debts were still unpaid, his creditors started to harass him more frequently than ever before. The unsettled question of succession ranged the pratnidhi, Raghaji and Sakwar Bai against the peshwa. Taking advantage of the physical weakness and mental restlessness of Shahu, they impressed upon him that while he was getting more and more into debts, his peshwa was getting richer day by day. In a fit of depression Shahu dismissed Nana Saheb from office. But Nana Saheb showed no resentment and in calm resignation sent the insignia of his office to the king. Shahu was soon disillusioned and, convinced of the loyalty of the peshwa, reinstated him by the end of February 1747, after a period of nearly two months of dismissal. This incident left little doubt in the minds of the people as to why the ascendancy of the peshwas in the Maratha affairs was inevitable. There was nobody else as capable and devoted in the service of the king as Nana Saheb.

Most probably after his reinstatement, the peshwa intervened in the quarrels of the two queens and succeeded in composing their differences, even though temporarily. A sort of agreement was reached by which the queens promised not to interfere in the matter of civil administration and in the disputes in the capital. They surrendered lands occupied on their behalf by their servants without *sanads*. The king reinforced this agreement by his promise to grant equal cash allowances and land to each queen. The peshwa then sought Shahu's permission to lead an expedition to Hindustan in

22. H. N. Sinha, *Rise of the Peshwas*, 210-11.

order to get some money to pay off his debts, and it was readily granted.

RAJPUTANA AFFAIRS

But to find money for Shahu was not the only purpose for which the peshwa wanted to go to the north. He wanted to tackle in person the situation that had arisen as a result of confused Maratha diplomacy in Rajputana, where his two powerful chieftains, Sindhia and Holkar, were taking opposite sides in the domestic politics of the Rajput states. Besides, with the death of Ranoji Sindhia in 1745 his power and possessions had passed to his eldest son Jayappa Sindhia whose rough bearing and impetuous conduct had rendered all co-operation between him and Malhar Rao Holkar well-nigh impossible.

The trouble had started with regard to the Jaipur state after the death of Sawai Jai Singh in September 1743. Of his two sons the elder one, Ishwari Singh, had succeeded to the throne; but his claim was challenged by his younger brother Madho Singh who had active support from Mewar. The situation became further complicated by another succession dispute going on in Bundi for some time past in which the rulers of Kotah, Mewar and Jaipur were involved and Maratha intervention had been invoked. As the Maratha generals in Rajputana worked at cross purposes and created confusion, the peshwa came to Jaipur territory in May 1748. He arranged a compromise and returned to Poona in July 1748. The compromise, however, did not work. Both in Jaipur and in Bundi the Marathas alienated the Rajputs by their greed for money. The peshwa himself failed to act either diplomatically or generously. He left the Maratha diplomacy in Rajputana to take its own tortuous course.

SHAHU'S TESTAMENT AND DEATH

After his return to Poona from Rajputana in July 1748 Nana Saheb paid a visit to Satara and spent the two months of August and September there. Since Shahu was perceptibly sinking to his end which was expected at any moment, and the prospects of an interregnum were likely to be of the utmost concern to him and to the Maratha confederacy, he did not leave Poona for another year and a half. During this period only two minor expeditions were undertaken, one in November 1748, and the other in January-February 1749, of which no accounts are available. For another six months the peshwa was busy with matters of domestic and social interest.

In August 1749 came the news that Shahu's condition was getting worse. The peshwa hastened to Satara with a strong army accompanied by Sindhia and Holkar. For some time past Shahu had sunk into a state of mental depression owing to the death of his devoted friend Sifripat Rao pratnidhi in 1746 and of his beloved wife Saguna Bai in 1748.²³ In fact, as one after another of his devoted companions departed, a sense of dreadful desolation came upon him and completely ruined his health. He felt extremely unhappy about the lack of an heir to the throne and would have adopted Sambhaji if he had a son. But since Sambhaji had no issue, Shahu told Mahadji Pant Purandare and Govind Rao Chitnis that Tara Bai had a grandson, the posthumous son of Shivaji III, whom he would like to adopt, if alive. It is difficult to say how Shahu had come to know of this secret. But Tara Bai confirmed that her grandson, named Ram Raja, was living incognito at a village called Pangaon under the protection of Darya Bai Nimbalkar. Shahu believed her statement and accepted him as his successor. Then started a web of intrigues of which the moving spirit was the elder queen, Sakwar Bai. She drew around her Sambhaji of Kolhapur, Jagjiwan pratnidhi, Yamaji Sheodeo, his *mutaliq*, and even Damaji Gaikwad, whom she incited to oppose the adoption, declaring Ram Raja an impostor. Even Raghuji Bhonsle was sounded, but he had too many things to attend to elsewhere.

To counteract the hostile intentions of Sakwar Bai, who even conspired to murder him, the peshwa had brought an army 35,000 strong to Satara with him. During the three months that he passed at Satara before Shahu's death Nana Saheb was alternately swayed by ambition and apprehension, but on the whole he kept his inclinations concealed. Sadashiv Rao had written to him that in the event of the raja's decease he 'must take the upper hand of all', but so long as Shahu was living he must 'not allow so much as a grain of oil seed to appear different' in his conduct.²⁴ On the whole, he considered it expedient to support the statement of Tara Bai and the inclination of the king in regard to Ram Raja. Shahu was pleased. He issued two royal decrees assigning to Nana Saheb the supreme military command in the state, besides supreme authority in civil affairs, which as peshwa he already possessed. In addition, he commanded that the peshwaship should remain in the family of Nana Saheb.²⁵ That made the office hereditary, but it only gave legal

²³ Thorle Shahu Maharaj Yanchi Charitra, 123. *Aitihasik Patra Vyavahar*, II, 55.

²⁴ Grant Dutt (ed. Edwardes), I, 442-43.

²⁵ *Aitihasik Patra Vyavahar*, 83-84. Thorle Shahu Maharaj Yanchi Charitra, 129.

sanction to an already accomplished fact. To Nana Saheb was also entrusted the welfare of the Maratha empire and of its future sovereigns. These decrees became the veritable Magna Carta of the peshwas.

As Shahu closed his eyes (15 December 1749) the peshwa immediately ordered his troops to occupy the city. The palace was also guarded. The *pratinidhi* and his *mutaliq* Yamaji were put under arrest and sent strongly escorted to distant hill forts. Sakwar Bai, broken by her bereavement and dazed by the prompt action of the peshwa, was persuaded, through her brother Kunwarji Shirke whom the peshwa had bribed for the purpose, to immolate herself on the funeral pyre of Shahu. Having thus frustrated the machinations of Sakwar Bai, and got rid of her by mean and cruel ingenuity,²⁶ the peshwa sent a body of troops to Pangaon to bring Ram Raja to Satara. On 4 January 1750 Ram Raja ascended the throne amidst scenes of royal splendour and popular jubilation. With his accession definitely started the fall of the house of Shivaji. Shahu was the last representative of the great dynasty to wield the royal power with dignity and command the loyalty of all.

RAM RAJA

Tara Bai had hoped that the accession of Ram Raja would enable her to control the leading strings of government. It was here that her ambition and interests came into clash with those of the peshwa. She had counted upon the support of Raghaji Bhonsle and Yawant Rao Dabhade. But the peshwa cleverly won over Raghaji when he paid a visit to Satara soon after Ram Raja's coronation. Raghaji had no interest in Satara now, since his son had not been adopted and his sphere of activity had been clearly demarcated from that of the peshwa. His creditors were constantly harassing him. He had to carry the heavy burden of ruling territories extending from Berar to Bengal and bordered by the two powerful satrapies of the Nizam and Alivardi Khan. He had neither the inclination nor the leisure to espouse the cause of Tara Bai and enter into a contest with the peshwa. Nana Saheb conciliated him by granting all his demands and investing him with full powers in respect of Orissa, Gondwana and Bihar. As a mark of special favour, he assigned to Raghaji the jagir of the imprisoned *pratinidhi*, Jagjiwan, in Berar. Thus propitiated Raghaji assured his co-operation to the peshwa.²⁷

With Raghaji alienated, and with Ram Raja changing his mind

²⁶ For a detailed discussion see H. N. Sinha, *Rise of the Peshwas*, 228-34.

²⁷ SPD, VI, 11, 23.

every moment²⁸ and behaving in a manner that disgusted her, Tara Bai fell back on her own resources. She left Satara in March 1750, ostensibly to visit the tomb of Raja Ram, which lay in the fort of Singhgad. The peshwa returned to Poona in April to celebrate the marriage of his son Vishwas Rao and of his cousin Sadashiv Rao. To flatter his vanity the peshwa left Raghujji Bhonsle at Satara to attend on the king and guide him in his absence.

After the peshwa and Tara Bai had left the scene, the new king sought to assert himself in a manner contrary to the interests of the peshwa and the wishes of his own grandmother. He even thought of keeping Tara Bai confined in the fort of Satara.²⁹ To put an end to Brahmin domination, he even thought of organising a party with the support of Babuji Naik, Raghujji, Fateh Singh and Yamaji Sheodeo. But his own incapacity³⁰ and the lukewarmness of those to whom he turned for help frustrated his design. Raghujji candidly told him that his attitude towards the peshwa and Tara Bai was unjustifiable.³¹ In these circumstances Ram Raja was left no alternative except that of accepting the lead of the peshwa in the affairs of the State.³² He had lost the sympathy of his grandmother once for all. Thus ended the brief spell of power that he had been allowed to enjoy after his coronation.

Having gone to Singhgad which was in the possession of the pant sachiv Chimnaji, Tara Bai started her intrigues against the peshwa with the sachiv as her ally; and when invited by the peshwa to come to Poona on the occasion of the marriages she pleaded ill-health and did not come. But the peshwa, who had seen through her game, imprisoned the pant sachiv; and then he persuaded her to visit Poona. Here she had long discussions with the peshwa, but could not see eye to eye with him. Upon this she left for Satara. Then the peshwa demanded the surrender of the fortresses of Singhgad, Tunga, and Tikona from the pant sachiv and had his demand endorsed by a writ from the king. Meanwhile Ram Raja, worried by the turn of affairs at Satara which were getting more and more complex because of his indiscreet interference, and harassed by want of money, came to visit the peshwa in Poona to settle matters as best as he

28 SPD, VI 42.

29 Ibid, 66, 85-88, 91.

30 Ibid, 41. Nana Purandare in his letter to Raghunath Rao writes, "The king has no sense."

31 Ibid, 19, 23, 26, 41, 50, 59, 65, 68, 73, 79, 114, 115, 116. Nos. 19 and 79 hint at the destruction of the Brahmin regime in the Maratha state.

32 Ibid, 59, 94, 95.

could. Raghaji Bhonsle had already come there at his instance to mediate between him and the peshwa.³³ In Poona the king, acting on the advice of the peshwa, formally took away Singh gad from the sachiv and gave it to the peshwa. Next came the turn of the pratinidhi, Jagjiwan, who had been kept in prison since the death of Shahu. He was deprived of his office and also of his fortresses of Sangola and Mangalvedhe. But since his agent Yamaji would not surrender Sangola, the king was entreated to proceed there in person, with an army commanded by Sadashiv Rao to wrest the fortress from him. After hard fighting, the fortress was captured on 29 September 1750, and the king encamped there for a month. Raghaji Bhonsle left for Nagpur without doing anything to further Tara Bai's designs.

SANGOLA AGREEMENT

At this time the peshwa got the king through the agency of Sadashiv Rao to endorse certain arrangements in regard to the administration of state affairs. These go by the name of Sangola agreement because the king was encamped at Sangola at the time. The agreement comprised the following arrangements:

(1) Bhawan Rao, who had been appointed pratinidhi at the time of Ram Raja's coronation, was confirmed in the office. Basudeo, the nephew of Yamaji Shedeo, who had been thrown out of office, was appointed his *mutatiq* or agent.

(2) Since Dabhade had become careless and was addicted to vices, it was agreed that Gaikwad should pay him a substantial pension and that his fief of Gujarat should be equally divided between the peshwa and Gaikwad.

(3) The subah of Karnatak, which had been assigned to Babuji Naik, was transferred to the peshwa who promised to pay a larger subsidy to the royal treasury.³⁴

(4) Govind Rao Chitnis was to remain with the king to manage his affairs on the advice of the peshwa. Similarly Bapuji Khande Rao was to remain with an army. They were given for their services fiefs worth four lakhs a year out of the pratinidhi's estates.

(5) Yawant Rao Potnis was placed in charge of the royal treasury and given a fief worth 40,000 rupees a year.

(6) Devrai Lapate was put in charge of the private affairs and estates of the king.

³³ SPD. VI, 63, 67, 71, 73, 81, 92, 105.

³⁴ Ibid. XXVIII, 65.

(7) The ashta pradhans were required, each according to his possessions, to pay an annual subsidy to the king.

(8) The revenues of Malwa amounting to a crore and a half were divided between Sindhia, Holkar and Pawar in the following manner: Holkar to have 74 lakhs, Sindhia 65 lakhs and a half, and Pawar ten lakhs and a half.³⁵

Along with these arrangements certain new appointments were made, and those who had been in office at the time of Ram Raja's coronation were confirmed. From Sangola the king went to Satara and Sadashiv Rao to Poona.

TARA BAI'S LAST BLOW

The Sangola agreement tightened the grip of the peshwa on the king and correspondingly stifled the ambition of Tara Bai who had fondly expected to be the power behind the throne. Her rage knew no bounds when she found Ram Raja disinclined to act except on the peshwa's advice. She, therefore, determined to overthrow the peshwa and keep the king under her thumb. She easily won over Uma Bai Dabhade, mother of Yawant Rao Dabhade, to her views, because her interests had suffered by the Sangola arrangements, and the peshwa would not modify them in spite of her pleadings. Then she corresponded with Ramdas Pant, the diwan of Salabat Jang, and Babuji Naik, besides Jagiwan and Yamaji Sheodeo both of whom had been dismissed from their posts. She even invited Sambhaji of Kolhapur to come to Satara to set aside Ram Raja. Having thus found her allies, she proceeded boldly. On 24 November 1750 she invited the king into the fort of Satara to partake of the feast of *Champa-shashthi* day. Ram Raja went in without a strong escort, and against the advice of men like Nana Purandare. After he entered the fort Tara Bai ordered the guards to shut the gates and thus Ram Raja became a life-long prisoner.³⁶

Having achieved her first objective with little effort, Tara Bai was prompted to proceed further in her designs. Taking advantage of strained relations between the peshwa and Sadashiv Rao, between the peshwa and Mahadji Pant Purandare, and the absence of the peshwa from Poona owing to his expedition to Karnatak in November 1750, she proceeded to strike her blow. Fortunately Sambhaji who was at first inclined to fall in with the views of Tara Bai was dissuaded from his purpose and refused to come to Satara. Damaji Gaikwad, Uma Bai's agent, when asked to march on Poona, did not

35 H. N. Sinha, *Rise of the Peshwas*, 241-42, SPD, VI, 118; XXVIII, 65.

36 SPD, VI, 116, 119, 125, 138, 139, 141, 117, 190, 200, 206, 215.

attack it, and passed on to Satara. There he defeated the partisans of the peshwa, but the latter did not leave him alone. Trimbak Rao Purandare re-formed his forces and defeated Damaji at Vaduth near Satara on 15 March 1751, and forced him to retreat beyond Wai. While he was encamped near Wai the peshwa suddenly appeared on the scene, having covered 400 miles between Nizamkonda and Satara in 13 days. Gaikwad lost heart when he came face to face with the peshwa and opened negotiations for peace.³⁷ But since Damaji would not accept the peshwa's terms the latter made a surprise attack on his camp. Damaji's troops fled; Damaji himself, his brother and son, Uma Bai and Yawant Rao, were made prisoners. The peshwa started for Satara to have his final reckoning with Tara Bai.

The fort of Satara was besieged. As the siege dragged on, and there were rumours of Salabat Jang marching on Poona, the peshwa left two strong detachments at Satara and Chandanwandan to watch the activities of Tara Bai, and returned to settle matters with the Dabhades. Damaji Gaikwad, their agent, was forced to surrender half of Gujarat. He also agreed to give up to the peshwa half of all his future conquests, to pay an annual tribute of Rs 5,25,000, to clear off the arrears amounting to Rs 15 lakhs, to maintain a contingent of 10,000 horse for the service of the peshwa, and to pay a sumptuous pension to the Dabhades. The peshwa on his part promised to drive out the Mughals from Gujarat and put him in possession of Ahmadabad, and conferred on him the title of *Senākhāskhel*. Uma Bai and her son were thus divested of all their power and possessions and forced to relinquish the cause of Tara Bai. The humiliation became too much for the mother and the son: smarting under it the mother died in November 1753, and the son in May 1754.³⁸ Jagjiwan and Yamaji did not have the guts to raise their little finger to help Tara Bai in this affair.

Thus discomfited, her partisans having been either won over or crushed or cowed down, Tara Bai expressed her readiness to come to terms with the peshwa.³⁹ She surrendered the fort of Satara to the peshwa, but refused to hand over Ram Raja to him. The peshwa, though at first concerned about the king, did not press for his release, perhaps because it would have prolonged the antagonism between him and Tara Bai and would not have helped his complete assumption of sovereign authority, for which he was very keen. After

³⁷ SPD, VI, 136, 139, 163-74, 178A, 191, 193.

³⁸ Ibid. XII, 109, 113.

³⁹ Ibid., VI, 214.

giving up the fort in October 1751, Tara Bai came to Poona early in 1752 at the request of the peshwa. There they met, came to an understanding and went to the temple of Khandoba at Jejuri to swear that they would not deviate from the compact. In the sacred precincts of the temple Tara Bai revealed that Ram Raja was not her grandson but a mere *gondhali* (wandering ballad singer) and an impostor. The revelation that the king was a mere impostor, levelled him to the dust in the eyes of the peshwa. The peshwas till now had respect and loyalty for the chhatrapati, even though the latter did not exercise actual power. But after this solemn declaration of Tara Bai he lived as a *roi faineant* in the fortress of Satara and his only significance lay in sending robes of investiture to every new peshwa who rose and fell as a result of political developments at Poona with which he had no contact. Henceforth Poona became the real capital of the Maratha confederacy, and the peshwa its virtual ruler. This closes one phase of Nana Saheb's regime. He had triumphed over all his adversaries at home, and established his complete ascendancy. He had stepped into the shoes of the chhatrapati and with this enhanced prestige and strengthened position, he now turned to reckon with the problems abroad which vitally touched the interests of the Maratha confederacy.

ANGLO-FRENCH STRUGGLE

At a time when the peshwa was absorbed in domestic politics, stirring events were happening all around Maharashtra. Down south on the Coromandal coast bitter struggles for supremacy were going on between the English and the French, who had espoused the cause of the rival country powers. It appeared that as a result of the triumphs of Dupleix the English would be swept out of the field. All this happened at a time when domestic difficulties were distracting the attention of the peshwa. But when he was comparatively free, he resolved not to allow the French to dominate the Deccan. He wanted to set up on the throne of Hyderabad a man who would bow to his will. Therefore, he opened negotiations with Ghazi-ud-din, the eldest son of the late Nizam-ul-mulk, who was living at the imperial court of Delhi and whom he promised help in wresting the viceroyalty of the Deccan from his brother Salabat Jang, the nominee of Dupleix. Sayvid Lashkar Khan, the governor of Aurangabad, was a partisan of Ghazi-ud-din. Both of them promised to cede the districts of Aurangabad and Burhanpur to the peshwa in return for his help.

After this agreement the peshwa left Poona on 29 January 1751,

received 17 lakhs from Sayyid Lashkar Khan, and proceeded to occupy the two ceded districts. When the news of these activities of the peshwa reached Salabat Jang, who was then in Karnatak with the French general Bussy, he hastened north to expel the peshwa. But as the peshwa was preparing to encounter him near Hyderabad he got the alarming report that Tara Bai was creating trouble in his absence and that Damaji Gaikwad had defeated Trimbak Rao Purandare near Satara. He had to return home immediately. So instead of fighting Salabat Jang, he concluded an agreement with him according to which he promised to give up the cause of Ghazi-ud-din; in lieu thereof the former paid him 21 lakhs and promised a further instalment of 15 lakhs.

After settling matters with Tara Bai and the Dabhades the peshwa resumed his campaign against Salabat Jang on the plea that he had not paid the stipulated sum of 15 lakhs. Holkar and Sindhia, who at the peshwa's command had escorted Ghazi-nd-din to the Deccan, were now desired to meet him at Aurangabad which Salabat Jang, with the help of Bussy had occupied.⁴⁰ On receipt of the news of Ghazi-ud-din's advance on Aurangabad, Bussy advised Salabat Jang to abandon it and march on Poona and carry war into his enemy's home. The plan was well conceived and successful. Having defeated the Marathas at Parner and Ghodnadi, and put them to flight by a surprise attack at Korkadi, Bussy and Salabat Jang came as far as Koregaon, only 16 miles from Poona. In sheer helplessness the peshwa was constrained to open negotiations for an armistice here. But they were deliberately prolonged. Meanwhile the peshwa ordered a part of his army to devastate the Nizam's dominions, and requested Raghujirao to overrun the country between the Painganga and the Godavari. The Nizam was upset. He beat a hasty retreat to Ahmadnagar and prepared to recover Trimbak which had fallen to the Marathas. The tables had been turned. Now reports were circulated in the camp of Salabat Jang that Bussy meditated treachery. The Nizam's army clamouring for the arrears of pay⁴¹ murdered Raghunath Das, his diwan and adviser Ghazi-nd-din, supported by Holkar and the main Maratha army, crossed the Narmada on 6 August 1752, and occupied Aurangabad.⁴² Harassed by these difficulties Salabat Jang did not know what to do. At this juncture, Ghazi-ud-din was unexpectedly poisoned to death by his step-mother (October 1752) and Salabat Jang's difficulties seemed to melt away.

40 SPD, XXV, 138.

41 Ibid, 137.

42 Ibid, 141, 144.

After Ghazi-ud-din's death the peshwa did not like to continue the war with vigour even though his commanders were gradually closing round the army of Salabat Jang near Bhalki. The Nizam also considered it expedient to placate Savvid Lashkar Khan by appointing him his diwan, and sought to come to an agreement with the peshwa. The latter was similarly inclined, provided the territorial cessions promised by the late Ghazi-ud-din were accepted by the Nizam.⁴³ On mutual agreement the treaty of Bhalki was concluded on 25 November 1752, according to which the whole country from the Tapti to the Godavari in the western part of Berar was ceded to the peshwa along with the town and fort of Trimbak. This meant 'the liberation of a large part of the Marathā a homeland from the Mughal yoke'.⁴⁴ The Nizam also agreed to pay the *chauth* in the same manner and on the same basis as was done in the time of the late Nizam ul-mulk.⁴⁵ By a separate agreement signed by Bussy, the French undertook to enforce the strict execution of the treaty by Salabat Jang.⁴⁶ After this Raghunji withdrew from the Nizam's dominions. Thus the peshwa had, in spite of his difficulties, achieved a signal success in his first conflict with the Nizam, and had made some impression on the French as well.

But the real intentions of the peshwa were different. He wanted to drive the French out of Salabat Jang's dominions so that the latter, deprived of their help, would fall an easy victim to the Marathas. To implement this design he did not hesitate in courting the help of the English who were equally interested in seeing the French expelled from the Nizam's court. The opportunity came in 1753 when Bussy fell ill and withdrew to Masulipatam to recoup his health. In his absence the peshwa intrigued with the Nizam's new diwan, Savvid Lashkar Khan, who also did not like the growth of French influence in the Nizam's court. The allies succeeded to some extent in discrediting and undermining the French influence when to their bitter surprise and consternation, Bussy, in spite of his sickness, returned to Hyderabad. Savvid Lashkar Khan lost heart and allowed himself to be replaced by Shah Nawaz Khan the able financier and author of *Ma'-asir-ul-Umārā*. Further, on the advice of Bussy the revenues of the northern sarkars were assigned to the French in lieu of the cash payments of the Nizam for the services of the French troops under Bussy.

⁴³ SPD, XXV, 148-49.

⁴⁴ Sardesai, *New History of the Marathas*, II, 325.

⁴⁵ *Lettres et Conventions*, 261-62. *Country Correspondence*, Military Department, 1753.

⁴⁶ *Lettres et Conventions*, 263-64.

In spite of this triumph of Bussy, the peshwa did not give up hope. Soon after, Dupleix was recalled by the French Company and Godehen succeeded him (1754). The departure of Dupleix, the recognition of Muhammad Ali as the nawab of Arcot and the peace terms offered by Godehen lowered the French credit considerably in the eyes of country powers. Both the Nizam and his new diwan were now inclined to expel the French and this was the opportunity for the peshwa. Spurning aside Bussy's counsel the Nizam invaded Mysore, ruled by a chief who was an ally of the French to realize the arrears of tribute due from him.

Meanwhile the peshwa also had been leading profitable expeditions to the Mysore region. In 1753 he went directly from Bhalki to Serigarbatam. Here the forces of the Nizam and the Maratha armies met each other and Bussy saw the peshwa for the first time. At this meeting the Frenchman made a great impression on the peshwa and he successfully persuaded him to seize Mysore. On his way to Poona the peshwa captured Dhurwad May 1753. The governor and council of Madras wrote on 29 October 1753 "in eight months with very little trouble but marching over a large tract of land he had acquired two crores of rupees."⁴⁷ Next year the peshwa led another expedition and captured Bagalkot, Amravati, Hariharpur and Mundalgi. Leaving Poona again in October 1754 the peshwa went to the western Karnataka despatching Mahadji Purandare and Muzaffar Khan Gardi to Bidar. During this expedition these two commanders quarrelled; Muzaffar Khan left the service of the peshwa and joined the nawab of Savanur. The campaign continued but the peshwa had to return to Poona in April 1755 to settle some important matters nearer home.

FALL OF ANGIAS

Back at Poona he had to engage himself in a most deplorable family quarrel which had far-reaching consequences for the Maratha state. After the death of Kanhoji Angria and of his son and successor Sekhoji, his two other sons Sambhaji and Manaji, had quarrelled for power and the possessions of their father. Baji Rao had interfered in 1735 to bring about an accommodation which was not honoured by the parties, he had however, succeeded in crippling the power of the Angrias by a division of their ancestral possessions between Sambhaji and Manaji. Nana Sahib followed his father's policy when, after the death of Sambhaji Tulaji his half brother succeeded him and started afresh the family feud with Manaji who was a protege

of the peshwa. In his pride of power, because he maintained a considerable army and a fleet of 60 war ships, which was a terror to the maritime powers of the west coast, he gave direct offence to the peshwa by withholding his tribute, invading his territories and declaring that he was a partisan of Tara Bai. The peshwa without a strong fleet was doubtful of success against Tulaji, and therefore he turned to the English at Bombay for help. Since there was no love lost between Tulaji and the Bombay council the English eagerly seized this opportunity of punishing the dreaded rover of the western coast. A treaty was signed on 19 March 1755, according to which the English were to command the allied fleet and attack from the sea while the peshwa's armies were to attack from the land.

Fortunately, just at this juncture there arrived at Bombay Admiral Watson with a squadron of six ships of the line, and Robert Clive at the head of a military force from England. They were chosen to lead the expedition, and the fleet, sailing on 7 February 1756 from Bombay, arrived off Gheria or Vijayadurg four days later when Tulaji, worsted on land by the peshwa's forces, had gone to the camp of Khandoji Mankar to negotiate for peace. Soon after his arrival in the harbour of Gheria, Watson opened fire on the fort, even though he was informed that Tulaji was negotiating for peace and surrender of the fort. The Angria fleet did not retreat when fired upon owing to Tulaji's orders. But by the time Tulaji had completed his negotiations, his entire fleet had been destroyed and the fort of Gheria had been occupied by the English. The occupation of Gheria by the English was not one of the terms of the treaty which the English had made with the peshwa. In spite of that they would not give it up until certain advantageous terms were conceded to them. Several months passed before these terms were conceded and Gheria, plundered of all its treasures which had been hoarded by generations of Angrias, was relinquished by the English. At this time the peshwa was busy elsewhere. On 11 April 1756 a letter from the Madras council stated that the peshwa with an army of 50,000 was advancing against Murar Rao Ghorpade. After this expedition the peshwa induced Salabat Jang to dismiss Bussy from his service; he then returned to Poona on 20 July 1756.

On 12 October 1756 the terms of a treaty with the English were settled. The English were to have the forts of Bankot and Himmatgarh, with ten villages adjacent to the fort of Bankot, the Dutch were to be excluded from trade in the dominions of the peshwa; no additional import duty was to be imposed on the goods of the English; and Tulaji was not to be given by the peshwa any territory below the

Ghats and on the sea coast. After this the peshwa annexed all the territories of Tulap and kept him a prisoner for life.⁴⁸

Thus closed an episode that affected adversely the fortunes of the Maratha confederacy in later years. Apart from securing the immense material gain, which included much money and gold looted from Ghera, the English had destroyed the Maratha fleet which could challenge them on the sea, and thus was permanently crippled the maritime strength of the Maratha confederacy. And what did the peshwa gain? The bare satisfaction that he had destroyed the power of the Angrias that challenged him. Nana Sahib who lacked in broad vision and dignified generosity behaved in a short sighted and unstatesmanlike manner not befitting his position.⁴⁹

MURAR RAO AND SAVANUR

During the peshwa's brief absence from Karnatak Murar Rao Ghorpade who like the Angrias refused to acknowledge Poona's authority⁵⁰ had formed against him a formidable league in combination with the Afghan nawabs of Karnool, Cuttappah and Savanur whose interest it was to defy both the peshwa and the Nizam. Meanwhile died Raghuji Bhonsle on 14 February 1755 and a strong and capable personality was removed from the Maratha confederacy. To the peshwa it offered an opportunity to interfere in the family feuds among Raghuji's sons and turn them to his own advantage. He supported Janop, whom he recognized as Raghuji's successor on payment of a present of 7 lakhs and on his undertaking to join the peshwa in his expedition against Murar Rao and the Afghan nawabs of Karnatak. Salabat Jang was also induced to join with 39,000 horse and an excellent park of artillery. The peshwa even wrote to the governor of Madras for sending him guns, gunners and artillery.

Accompanied by able leaders such as Malhar Rao Holkar, Vithal Shivdev, Janop and Mudhop Bhonsle, Naro Shankar and Yawant Rao Pawar, the peshwa besieged Savanur early in 1756. The nawab, aided by Murar Rao Ghorpade, Muzaffar Khan and a number of Poligars had collected a force of 20,000 horse and 50,000 peons. But he had to surrender in May. Under the terms of peace the nawab paid an indemnity of 11 lakh, ceded a part of his territories yielding

48 For a detailed account see 'The capture and surrender of Ghera by the English': *Proceedings of Indian Historical Records Commission* 18th Session 226-33. Bombay Select Committee Consultations September 1755 April 1758 Ringe D Vol. 48 II, 350-51

49 For a different view see Sudeo II, *New History of the Marathas* II, 350-51

50 He claimed that Simbhaji of Kolhapur had given him the right to collect chauth in the southern countries (*Country Correspondence*, 1753, 138).

an annual revenue of 8 lakhs and surrendered Muzaflar Khan, who had joined his service a year before after his quarrel with Mahadji Purandare.⁵¹ Subsequently, in May 1757, Murar Rao Ghorpade formed an offensive and defensive alliance with the peshwa;⁵²

LAST PHASE OF KARNATAK CAMPAIGNS

After peace with Savanur, i.e. peshwa, accompanied by Salabat Jang, proceeded beyond the Tungabhadra and realized tribute from Bidnur, Chitradurg, Raidurg and Harpanhalli. Sondha undertook to pay 8 lakhs; Basavpattan submitted. "Thus the southern frontier of the Maratha State now extended from the Krishna to the Tungabhadra river."⁵³

Nana Saheb marched personally to Karnatak for the last time in 1757. With an army of 60,000 horse, accompanied by Sadashiv Rao and Murar Rao Ghorpade, he marched to Seringapatam. Nanraj, the *sardadhikari* of Mysore, declined to pay the heavy sum demanded by the peshwa and 'made a spirited defence'. But he had to make a 'hasty compromise' because the Maratha artillery was 'respectable' and the siege operations were directed by Europeans.⁵⁴ Peace was made on condition of payment of 12 lakhs in ready money and goods; for the remaining amount it was arranged that 11 districts which were in the peshwa's possession should remain under him. On his way back the peshwa took Sira 'partly by contrivance and partly by threats'.⁵⁵

Balwant Rao Mehendale, whom the peshwa left in charge, took effective measures to defend the newly acquired territory and make fresh conquests. The nawab of Cudappah was killed. Cudappah was captured (September 1757). The nawab's heir was forced to surrender one-half of his territory.⁵⁶ Tribute was realised from the Poligars of the Sira country. Hoskot and Mulbagal were occupied. The nawab of Arcot was hard pressed: he paid a contribution of 4½ lakhs. The Marathas marched towards Chittoor and Vellore.⁵⁷ Balwant

⁵¹ *Balaji Bai Rao Rognisi*, II, 255-56. Rajwade, III, 472, 473. SPD: *Treaties, Engagements and Sanads*, 88-93. SPD, XXVIII, 140. *Country Correspondence*, Military Department, 1756, 119.

⁵² SPD, XXVIII, 140, 182, 185.

⁵³ Sardesai, *New History of the Marathas*, II, 329.

⁵⁴ Wilks, *History of Mysore*, I, 398.

⁵⁵ *Country Correspondence*, Military Department, 1757, 203.

⁵⁶ SPD, XXVIII, 128, 146. SPD : *Treaties, Engagements and Sanads*, pp. 94-103. *Country Correspondence*, Military Department, 1757, 337; 1758, 57. Bombay Select Committee Proceedings, 15 September 1757.

⁵⁷ *Country Correspondence*, Military Department, 1757, 129-34, 141.

Rao realised contributions from some places in the Nellore district. "My arrival in these parts", he wrote to the peshwa, "has created a stir from Hyderabad to Masulipatam, and from thence to Arcot."⁵⁸

The peshwa's incursions in the south resulted in solid gains. One-half of the territories of the nawabs of Savanur and Cudappah were annexed to the Maratha kingdom; fourteen districts of Mysore were taken under control; Sira, 'the Gate of the Carnateck country',⁵⁹ was occupied; and *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* were collected from all parts of Karnataka. The peshwa fully exploited his friendly relations with Salabat Jang in extending his own power in the southern parts. The Nizam accompanied the peshwa in his first Mysore expedition and co-operated with him in his attack on Savanur. The system of appointing *kamarisdars* for collecting the tribute and revenue was adopted and the practice of wintering the armies in the conquered territory was started. The process of establishing permanent control was thus begun; but, before the gains were consolidated, Haidar Ali rose to power and the third battle of Panipat gave a rude shock to Maratha prestige.

The resistance in Mysore was initiated by Nanraj, prompted by Haidar. Balwant Rao returned to Poona in February 1758. As the main Maratha army turned its back on Mysore, the *dalvai* expelled the Marathas from the fourteen districts whose revenues had been assigned to them. The peshwa, therefore, sent at the beginning of 1759 an army under Gopal Rao Patwardhan to confirm the Maratha claims. The peshwa's orders in this respect were categorical: "It is a thousand times preferable", he wrote to Gopal Rao, "to retain possession of the districts we have already occupied. In case you are forced to give them back insist on the payment of all past arrears and the regular tribute for two years, the total amount being 50 lakhs of rupees. If the latter course is followed then, in future, the king of Mysore must pay annually a tribute of 30 lakhs, or allow us to hold such districts as will yield 15 lakhs a year and pay 15 lakhs more in cash."⁶⁰

Gopal Rao besieged Bangalore, and penetrated as far as Chennapattan, 40 miles east of Seringapatam. At this stage of Mysore affairs Haidar Ali came to the rescue of his chief. He forced Patwardhan to raise the siege of Chennapattan and Bangalore,⁶¹ and so harassed him that the latter agreed to give up the Maratha claim to the

⁵⁸ SPD, XXVII, 210.

⁵⁹ *Country Correspondence*, Military Department, 1757, 145.

⁶⁰ SPD, XXVII, 224, 232.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 254, 256.

fourteen districts for a sum of 32 lakhs, half of which was paid in cash and the remainder was advanced by the Maratha bankers on Haidar Ali's personal security.⁶²

Gopal Rao Patwardhan was censured by the peshwa who wrote to him: "Haidar has destroyed your prestige." Stung by this censure Gopal Rao marched northward to Madras where he offered his help to the French and the English. But as neither would have it, he turned to rob the temple of Tirupati of the rich offerings made at the annual festival which was being held at that time. From this foul purpose he was prevented, Muhammad Ali, the nawab of Arcot, came to the rescue of the pilgrims. Meanwhile he had been called to Poona and his command devolved upon Visaji Krishna Joshi Biniwale who was sent to Karnatak with an army composed of 8,000 horse, 4,000 sepoys and 20 guns. There was a special reason for sending this expedition. The ruler of Mysore had sought the peshwa's aid in suppressing Haidar Ali. Gopal Rao took some important forts and collected tribute on his way to Mysore.⁶³ In August 1760—nearly a year after the departure of Gopal Rao—Visaji Krishna defeated Haider Ali at Seringapatam and forced him to take shelter at Bangalore. The Maratha outposts in that region which had been occupied by Haidar Ali and other chieftains were wrested from them and also the usual Maratha contributions were realized from them.⁶⁴ But since the peshwa was at this time confronted by momentous issues in the north, he was compelled to hold in abeyance his schemes of conquest in the Deccan and the Far South.

CONTEST WITH NIZAM: UDGIR

In one important respect Nana Sahib's policy stood in striking contrast to that of his father. While the latter took a personal interest in the affairs of the north, the former's personal interest lay mainly in the south. Balaji's ambition was to conquer the southern territories as far as Mysore with the Nizam strangled into impotence and subordination to him. In this he did not reckon with the English and Haidar Ali, who were soon to assume dominating positions in Hyderabad and Mysore respectively.

After his success at Savanur the peshwa resumed his plans to detach the French from Salabat Jang and to take Bussy in his own service.⁶⁵

⁶² Wilkes, I, 410-13. According to a letter of the governor and council of Madras, dated 5 October 1758, the amount of contribution was 20 lakhs.

⁶³ *Country Correspondence*, Military Department, Vol. VIII, 237, 238, 289, 350, 380, 387. Wilkes, I, 466.

⁶⁴ SPD, XXVIII, 266.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 140.

At the same time he offered to help the English who, beset with unforeseen difficulties in Bengal, very much desired the expulsion of the French from the court of Hyderabad. In Bengal, nawab Siraj-ud-daulah had captured the English settlement of Calcutta on 20 June 1756. It was as much to the interest of the English as of the peshwa that the nawab of Bengal should not be allowed to combine with the French. Such a combination would augment his strength ; it would handicap the English in regaining their lost position, and the peshwa in obtaining the *chauth* and plunder year after year. The peshwa, in secret league with Shah Nawaz Khan, Salabat Jang's diwan, contrived to have Bussy formally dismissed from the Nizam's service (May 1756). But when, after his dismissal, the English were invited to send a detachment to attack and expel the discredited French commander, they expressed their inability to do so, because they had practically denuded Madras of all their effectives by sending an army under Watson and Clive to regain their lost settlements in Bengal. The French in Hyderabad, however, could not be dislodged owing to the resourcefulness and cool courage of Bussy, who called Law from Masulipatam to his help, discomfited his enemies at the battle of Char Minar outside Hyderabad, and manipulated matters with such consummate skill that his enemies were disarmed and he was publicly restored to his position by Salabat Jang on 20 August 1756.⁶⁶ But undeterred by this frustration of their plans to oust Bussy they created trouble in the northern sarkars, the revenues of which had been assigned to the French.

The striking success of Bussy at Char Minar affected Maratha confidence in Salabat Jang's political capacity as also in the effectiveness of his army. The peshwa demanded the cession of the entire north Godavari region. Resistance came from Salabat Jang's brother Nizam Ali who was governor of Betar. A large Maratha army, under the nominal leadership of the peshwa's eldest son Vishwas Rao, invaded the Nizam's territory. Peace was made in December 1757, the Marathas gaining territory worth 25 laks along with the fort of Naldurg.

In the meantime important developments had taken place at Hyderabad. Aided by the peshwa and encouraged by the absence of Bussy, who intended to go to Bengal to the assistance of Siraj-ud-daulah after restoring order in the northern sarkars, Shah Nawaz Khan plotted to replace Salabat Jang by Nizam Ali. But the plot

⁶⁶ Bombay Select Committee Consultations, Commonwealth Office, Range D, Vol. 48, pp. 222-24. SPD, XXV, 167. The writer of this Marathi letter says that as a result of the battle of Char Minar the Marathas lost much of their reputation as also their faith in the capacity of the Nizam and his army.

miscarried. Cautioned by the French officers of his escort, Salabat Jang refused to enter the fort of Daulatabad where Shah Nawaz Khan had intended to make him a prisoner. Bussy, who could not proceed to Bengal owing to the fall of Chandernagar on 23 March 1757, returned to Daulatabad in time to checkmate further developments there. On his return Shah Nawaz Khan surrendered in shame and was replaced as chief minister by Bussy's confidential secretary, Haidar Jang. Bussy's ascendancy was restored. But confusion prevailed; Haidar Jang and Shah Nawaz Khan were murdered in May 1758. Immediately afterwards Bussy was recalled from Hyderabad in July 1758 by Lally. With his departure the French influence at the court of the Nizam completely collapsed, the peshwa and the enemies of Salabat Jang got the finest opportunity to proceed with their plans against him. It came as a great relief to the peshwa, who now felt sure of paralysing the power of the Nizam and actually succeeded in seducing Ibrahim Khan Gardi, the able artillery commandant of the Nizam trained by Bussy.⁶⁷ Nizam Ali with the assistance of the peshwa also set about his plans for gaining control over Salabat Jang's affairs. Taking advantage of the absence of Salabat Jang, who had gone to the relief of the French—then besieged by the English at Masulipatam—he seized Hyderabad. Salabat Jang on his return had to conciliate him by dismissing his brother Basalat Jang, who had been appointed diwan after Haidar Jang's death, and appointing him to that important office.

Once supreme in his brother's affairs Nizam Ali showed scant regard for the peshwa, his erstwhile ally, and refused to carry out his agreement with him. But the peshwa had anticipated it, and was making preparations for a trial of strength. On 9 November 1759 the Nizam's governor of Ahmednagar was bribed to surrender it to the peshwa. Nizam Ali persuaded Salabat Jang to declare war on the peshwa. The Maratha army, led by Sadashiv Rao and Vishwas Rao and supported by Ibrahim Khan's artillery and a number of famous commanders including Raghunath Rao, stormed the fort of Bahadurgarh on the Bhima, and harassed the main body of the Nizam's troops, numerically and in leadership inferior to those of the peshwa. Salabat Jang and Nizam Ali, who were in person conducting the campaign, were badly beaten at Udgir, a few miles north of Bidar, and cooped up in the fort of Ousha early in February 1760. After four days of rigorous investment the two brothers sued for peace, which was granted on the terms dictated by the peshwa.⁶⁸ The Nizam agreed

67 SPD, II, 4.

68 Ibid, 23-83. *Aithasik Patra Vyavahar*, I, 181. Rajwade, I, 165-66.

to cede territories worth 62 lakhs a year with the forts of Asirgarh, Daulatabad, Bijapur, Ahmadnagar and Burhanpur, and to dismiss Vyankat Rao Nimbalkar, a Maratha sardar, from his service. He retained only a fraction of his father's possessions comprising Hyderabad and some portions of the provinces of Bijapur and Bidar, and that too on the condition of paying *chauth* to the peshwa. All the terms were fulfilled except the surrender of the fort of Daulatabad, which had to be besieged for some time and ultimately bought over for a bribe from its commandant.

Thus the peshwa by 1760 had succeeded in his main objective so far as the Nizam was concerned, due to a lucky conjunction of events that had removed the French from the orbit of his design. But he hardly realized that the terms of the treaty of Udgir were, by reason of their harshness and the humiliation for the Nizam, best calculated to drive him into the arms of the English, who had already been courted by Nizam Ali and were ready to take the place of the French at Hyderabad, and indeed in the whole of Karnatak, in the same manner as they had done in Bengal. That was the implication of the collapse of the French influence at Hyderabad, and of the peshwa's attitude towards the Nizam as demonstrated by the treaty of Udgir. From the moment the treaty was concluded, it was clear, as pointed out by one of the peshwa's spies in the Nizam's camp, that it would never be carried out by the Nizam, who would seek to evade its terms as soon as the peshwa was in trouble.⁶⁹ Let alone generosity in the moment of triumph, tactical expediency in the game of high politics demanded a less severe treatment of the Nizam. But the keen vision of the Chitpavan Brahmin failed to take a broad view of the sweep of events that were taking place all round him, with ramifications directly affecting his own welfare and that of the Maratha confederacy over which he claimed to rule. To think of swallowing up the Nizam at a time when the Marathas were in grips with Ahmad Shah Abdali in the north was a serious blunder. The difficulties for the peshwa to dominate the two theatres of war—in the Deccan as also in Hindustan—and to control the conquests in these regions were as insuperable as the resources required for the purpose were beyond his capacity to supply.

NORTH INDIAN POLITICAL SCENE

It is now necessary to retrace our steps and to review the development of Maratha policy in north India since the peshwa's expedition to Jaipur in 1748. His objective had been to compose the family

feud of Ishwari Singh and Madho Singh, and the differences of Sindhia and Holkar who interfered in it. As already stated, Balaji did not take much personal interest in north Indian affairs; he left them to the discretion and responsibility of his lieutenants. The political situation in north India was gradually becoming highly complicated by the interaction of new factors and the peshwa's lack of a keen personal interest in them was ultimately suicidal to the interest of the Maratha confederacy. After the breakdown of Mughal imperial government in the years following the invasion of Nadir Shah, Rajputana was disintegrating into a congeries of states without any political unity or coherence; and the rulers of Jaipur, Jodhpur, Udaipur, Kotah and Bundi were converting it into a veritable cockpit of mutual strife and rival territorial ambitions. In the Gangetic Doab the Ruhelas had founded a small but compact principality with plenty of resources at their command. Between the Doab and Rajputana the Jats had risen to prominence under their capable leader Suraj Mal. The Punjab as a result of repeated onslaughts of Ahmad Shah Abdali was gradually falling under his yoke. At Delhi Ahmad Shah had succeeded his father Muhammad Shah in 1748, and was ruling as a *roi faineant*, a phantom tool in the hands of masterful ministers and unscrupulous intriguers, while the frontiers of his empire shrunk to a few miles round about Delhi. The territories comprised in Avadh had been brought under the sway of imperial wazirs, thus becoming an independent appanage of their own. The currents and cross-currents of polities in northern India, engendered by the purposes and cross-purposes of the Rajput states, the Jats, the Ruhelas, Ahmad Shah Abdali, and the imperial court demanded a clear comprehension and consummate skill in handling them if the Marathas were to play their part effectively and fulfil the policy of expansion initiated by Baji Rao and adopted by Nana Sahib as his goal.

MARATHAS, SAFDAR JANG AND AFGHANS

After the peshwa's departure from Rajputana Ishwari Singh of Jaipur committed suicide as he was unable to meet the Maratha demand for money, and his successor Madho Singh intrigued against his Maratha protectors. In January 1751 about 500 Marathas were put to the sword in Jaipur city. Partly owing to the strain of feeling thus engendered and partly because of the pressing requests of the wazir Safdar Jang to aid him in his Bangash campaign for which he promised 50 lakhs, Malhar Rao Holkar hastily settled matters with the Rajputs and left for Agra on 7 February 1751.

In the Avadh-Afghan contest Holkar and Jayappa Sindhia joined the wazir. In spite of the alliance of the Bangash Afghans under

Ahmad Khan with the Ruhelas under Sadullah Khan, they were defeated with heavy losses and dislodged from their strongholds.⁷⁰ Farrukhabad was occupied and then Ruhelkhand was overrun. When the rains set in the wazir went to Lucknow; the Marathas cantoned in the Bangash territory and plundered the entire country, which brought them much money and valuable spoils. After the rainy season the Afghans, unable to face the Maratha invasion, fled with their women and children to the lower Himalayas, near Chilkiva, where, sheltered by the raja of Almora, they entrenched their position and could not be dislodged. Four months passed in desultory fighting, in March 1752, when peace was made, the Marathas returned home. According to the terms of the settlement the revenues of half of Ahmad Khan's territory were assigned to the Marathas, but Ahmad Khan was to administer them, and make payments to the two Maratha bankers stationed at Kanauj and Ahganj till the expenses of the campaign incurred by the Marathas were fully paid. Some other possessions of the Bangash family, including Kanauj, were to be occupied by Govind Pant Bundele, the Maratha agent. Safdar Jang took a few other places for himself.⁷¹ The Afghans on the whole did not suffer much loss of territory and the Marathas retained only a precarious hold on these new acquisitions till the battle of Panipat.

ALLIANCE WITH EMPEROR

Further north in the Punjab and Multan the sweep of events was gradually drawing the Marathas and Ahmad Shah Abdali into a bitter struggle for supremacy. The Afghan Shah invaded the Punjab for the third time in December 1751 and secured from the emperor Ahmad Shah the cession of the subahs of Lahore and Multan.

This invasion brought about a remarkable alliance between the emperor and the Marathas through the instrumentality of Safdar Jang. After the campaign against the Ruhelas was brought to a close the Marathas left for home in March 1752, and Safdar Jang was called to the court where consternation had spread owing to the Abdali's fresh invasion of the Punjab. To prevent a repetition of the horrors of Nadir Shah's invasion the emperor had urged Safdar Jang to secure at any price the assistance of the Marathas. Safdar Jang, therefore, immediately sent messengers to recall the Marathas, who had by then reached the Ganges on their march back to Malwa. He met them and concluded on behalf of the emperor a defensive alliance with Malhar Rao Holkar and Jankoji Sindhia, who acted on behalf

⁷⁰ SPD, XXI, 43; XXVI, 176.

⁷¹ Siyar, III, 304-8.

of the peshwa. According to the terms of this alliance the emperor was to pay to the peshwa for his armed support 50 lakhs of rupees, of which 30 lakhs would cover the cost of keeping the Abdali out. The *chauth* of the subahs of Lahore and Multan, of the four *mahals* (Sialkot, Pasrur, Gujrat and Aurangabad) ceded to Nadir Shah, and of the districts of Hisar, Muradabad, Sambhal and Badauri, was assigned to the Marathas for their military expenses. The peshwa was appointed subahdar of Ajmer and Agra and was charged with the duties of suppressing all internal enemies and expelling all foreign foes.

Hardly had these terms been settled, when the Abdali's envoy arrived in Delhi and received the emperor's confirmation of the cession of Lahore and Multan. Twelve days after the departure of the envoy from Delhi arrived Sardar Jang with his Maratha allies at the head of 50,000 troops. When he wanted to push on to the Punjab, he was told by the emperor's favourite Javid Khan that the Afghan Shah had been bought off by the cession of Lahore and Multan. In bitterness of feeling the wazir held aloof from the imperial court, and his Maratha allies went on plundering the people round about Delhi. Javid Khan propitiated Malhar Rao Holkar by paying a few lakhs on 4 May 1752. But as Sindhia and Holkar were at this time under the orders of the peshwa to escort to the Deccan Ghazi-ud-din who was to contest the viceroyalty of Hyderabad as the nominee of the Marathas they made haste to leave for the south. After the departure of the Marathas the wazir, boiling in rage for the action of the emperor under the advice of Javid Khan, got the favourite murdered on 27 August 1752.⁷²

The murder of Javid Khan, preceded by the departure for the Deccan of Ghazi-ud-din who was poisoned to death at Burhanpur, left Sardar Jang the sole master of the court and deprived the emperor of his most powerful supporters. The court party vowing vengeance on Sardar Jang drew on to their side the youthful but unscrupulous and fearless son of Ghazi-ud-din, known as Imad-ul-mulk who had received all the titles of his father and the office of mir bakhshi under the patronage of Sardar Jang himself. Having joined the court party consisting of the emperor, his mother Udham Bai and Intizam-ud-daulah, the son of the late wazir Qamor-ud-din, he sought to overthrow his former patron.⁷³ As the court party was preparing for a final trial of strength with Sardar Jang, who had cantoned two contingents of the Maratha army before the gates of Delhi to overawe the court and

72 SPD, XXI, 55. *Siyar* III, 329.

73 SPD, XXVII, 83.

the capital, came the alarming news that the Abdali had again invaded the Punjab. His envoy arrived in Delhi in February 1753 to demand payment of 50 lakhs of rupees, but the wazir detained him for some time and ultimately sent him away empty-handed, counting upon the support of his Maratha allies.⁷⁴

Immediately after this broke out in all violence a bitter civil war between the parties of the emperor and Safdar Jang; it deluged the streets of Delhi and its environs in blood and raged from 26 March to 7 November 1753. Into this civil war were drawn at its different stages the Marathas, the Jats and the Ruhelas, as the allies of the contending parties. On receipt of an appeal for help from the emperor the peshwa decided not to support the rebel wazir. Some Maratha contingents fought on the imperial side, but the main army did not arrive till the contest was over. Safdar Jang withdrew to Avadh completely vanquished. Then the erstwhile allies, Intizam-ud-daulah and Imad-ul-mulk, began their struggle for supremacy at the imperial court.

The civil war left the imperial party indebted to the extent of a crore and a half for they had to employ for seven months about 80,000 troops comprising their own levies and those of their Maratha and Ruhela allies. Imad ul-mulk who had eclipsed his rival Intizam-ud-daulah, proceeded to settle matters in the following manner. To wreak vengeance on the Jats who had ruthlessly plundered Delhi, he induced the Marathas to fall on the rich territories of the Jats southward of the capital. The Ruhela and Bahash chiefs were bought off. Then Imad ul-mulk with his Maratha allies invaded the Jat territories. They captured Ballibgarh, killed a chieftain named Balu Jat and entered the territories of Suraj Mal in January 1754.⁷⁵

RAGHUNATH RAO'S FIRST NORTH INDIAN EXPEDITION

Meanwhile a powerful Maratha army had been sent north by the peshwa under his brother Raghunath Rao. Having been joined by Malhar Rao he had passed through Malwa and then proceeded to Rajputana instead of marching to Delhi because peace had already been made between the emperor and Safdar Jang. Contributions were realised from Jaipur and several smaller states (November 1753-January 1754). Having come to know of secret negotiations between Suraj Mal and Madho Singh, Raghunath demanded two crores of

74 SPD, XXI, 53-55.

75 *Siyar*, III, 330-35.

rupees from the former as a penalty. Since the money could not be paid, the Marathas started a long and harassing campaign against Suraj Mal. They besieged the strong fortresses of Dig and Kumbher but could not make any impression without siege guns. Attempts were made through Imad-ul-mulk to secure siege guns from the imperial arsenal of Delhi. But his requisition was not complied with by the emperor acting on the advice of Intizam-ud-daulah. During the siege of Kambher which dragged on for months Malhar Rao's son Khande Rao was killed but the fortress did not fall. To assuage the embittered feelings of Malhar Rao, Suraj Mal promised to pay 30 lakhs. Thereupon Malhar Rao and Raghunath Rao withdrew to Mathura (May 1754).

About this time Intizam-ud-daulah, in pursuance of his scheme to form a coalition against Imad-ul-mulk with Safdar Jang, the Jats and the Rajputs, had persuaded the emperor to march with his troops to escape from virtual imprisonment in Delhi to Sikandrabad. Imad-ul-mulk induced Holkar to attack the imperial camp at Sikandrabad. Malhar Rao, burning in anger for the death of his son, which he attributed to the refusal of the emperor to lend his siege guns, made a dash on Sikandrabad. The emperor and Intizam-ud-daulah fled away, leaving the imperial ladies to the tender mercy of the rude soldiery of the Deccan (May 1754). Malhar Rao held the captured ladies to a ransom of 40 lakhs. Imad-ul-mulk had now the full satisfaction of having crushed his rival and humiliated the emperor who had sided with him. Then he entered Delhi with his Maratha allies, divested Intizam-ud-daulah of all his offices, deposed Ahmad Shah on 2 June 1754, and set up a new puppet emperor under the style of Alamgir II.⁶ He made himself wazir of the new emperor and ruled in complete ascendancy.

The establishment of Imad's ascendancy at the court at the cost of Intizam-ud-daulah was followed by the death of Safdar Jang, another rival of his, a few months later (October 1754). It left the Shi'i party shorn of power and gave an opportunity for religious persecution of the Shias by the orders of the emperor acting on Imad's advice. Alongside religious persecution there began a systematic spoliation of Delhi to pay the Marathas and the arrears due to the imperial soldiery. A sum of 82½ lakhs was demanded by Raghunath Rao, of which about 9 lakhs were paid in cash. For 17½ lakhs bills were given on the bankers; 13½ lakhs were never paid. For the remaining 42½ lakhs the emperor gave assignments on the revenues of Bengal, Bareilly, Sambhal, Kora and a few other *mahals*. But even the bills

on the bankers were not honoured, and therefore, Imad had to alienate the revenues of the lands round Delhi which were set apart for feeding the emperor and the wazir.⁷⁷ This was the gain that Raghunath Rao secured during the five months he spent in the environs of Delhi.

From that convenient centre Raghunath Rao, along with Malhar Rao, made marches and counter-marches into the countryside, ravaging and raising contributions from the villages and towns of the Doab. By January 1755 he went as far as Garh Mukteshwar, where he came to an agreement with Hafiz Rahmat Khan in regard to the Maratha claims on the Ruhelas. Then he passed through Bulandshahr to the Motipur ferry on the Jamuna, which he forded in February and reached Pushkar lake near Ajmer in March.⁷⁸ He entered Rajputana with the purpose of realizing contributions that Jaipur, Kotah, Bundi and other Rajput states had promised him during his march in October 1753. Meanwhile Malhar Rao had effected a reconciliation between Intizam ud-daulah and Imad-ul-mulk and set out for Rajputana (January 1755).

The dynastic disputes in the Rajput states had lured the Marathas to interfere for monetary gains. But the lavish promises of tribute could not often be made good by the rulers owing to the lack of resources and the sterile nature of their country. Madho Singh of Jaipur and Ummid Singh of Bundi had not paid their tribute to the Marathas. Jayappa Sindhia, who had been sent by Raghunath Rao in June 1754 to assist Ram Singh against Bijay Singh in the contest for the throne of Maiwar, was murdered by the latter on 25 July 1755. It became now a point of honour for the peshwa to avenge this murder. He, therefore, ordered Antaji Mankeshwar to hasten from Kunch on the Jamuna with an army of 10,000 to the assistance of Dattaji Sindhia who was then looking after Maratha interests in Rajputana. The overwhelming strength of the Marathas in Rajputana left little prospect for Rajput success, and since the Marathas had also wasted much time in that barren country without even recovering the cost of their campaign both sides were glad to come to terms by the end of February 1756.

RAGHUNATH RAO'S SECOND NORTH INDIAN EXPEDITION

Raghunath Rao returned to Poona in August 1755 and soon after was followed by Malhar Rao Holkar. His campaign in the north

⁷⁷ SPD, XXVII, 89-90

⁷⁸ Ibid, 79. It gives the itinerary and route of Raghunath Rao.

for two and a half years had in no way benefited the bankrupt government of the peshwa which—as Nana Saheb himself complained—was eternally ‘in the grips of that consumption, the malady of debt’.⁷⁹ Yet Raghunath Rao was ordered again to go to Hindustan about the end of 1756. He was to realize the tribute promised by the Rajput states and contributions from the Doab districts assigned by the wazir. In February 1757 he reached Indore; there, joined by Malhar Rao, he thought of marching for Delhi and the Doab. But Ahmad Shah Abdali had already occupied Delhi, and the Maratha army was neither big enough nor adequately financed to encounter him.⁸⁰ So Raghunath decided to enter Rajputana. From there he wrote to the peshwa in July that he was feeding his troops only by looting villages, since most of the places in that country were fortified, and not a grain of food could be had without fighting. He could not even raise a loan.⁸¹ In such a plight Raghunath Rao naturally could not enter the Doab so long as the Abdali was there.

After the departure of Raghunath Rao and Malhar Rao from Delhi early in 1755, and his reconciliation with Intizam-ud-daulah, Imad-ul-mulk led an expedition into the Punjab and captured its *de facto* ruler, the notorious Mughlani Begam, in March 1756. A few months later Ahmad Shah Abdali came again (October 1756). He resented the kidnapping of Mughlani Begam, whom he called his daughter, but far more than that, he resented the extension of the wazir’s authority over the Punjab which he regarded as his own. He occupied Lahore without difficulty, crossed the Sutlej and entered Delhi in January 1757. A few days before his entry into the capital Imad’s Maratha ally, Antaji Mankeshwar, had fled away; Najib Khan and Suraj Mal, whom the wazir was coaxing to organize a defence, had kept aloof. The *khutbah* was read in Delhi mosques in the name of Ahmad Shah Abdali as emperor. Guided by Najib Khan, a detachment of his army completely defeated Antaji Mankeshwar at Faridabad in February and plundered Agra. From Agra the Afghans passed on to Mathura, Brindaban and Gokul, overcoming the resistance of the Jats and the naked Naga mendicants, and perpetrated cruelties that defy description. All this time while the Jats were being annihilated at Mathura, and 5,000 Nagas perished to save Gokul, Raghunath Rao and his lieutenants, Malhar Rao and Dattaji Sindhia, though within striking distance in Rajputana did not raise a finger to help the oppressed people. Early in April 1757 the Abdali left Delhi glutted

79 *Aitihasik Patria Iyavahar*, I, 127.

80 *Rajwade*, I, 52, 67.

81 *Ibid*, 71.

with the plunder of Delhi, Agra, Mathura and Brindaban which was valued at 12 crores, and as he left he bestowed the empire of Hindustan on Alamgir II. He made Imad-ul-mulk his wazir and Nazib Khan his bakhshi. Najib Khan was further commissioned to act as the agent of Ahmad Shah at the imperial court. The Punjab was annexed by the Abdali and Timur Shah, his son, was appointed its governor.⁸²

After the Afghans withdrew the Marathas appeared. In May 1757 Raghunath Rao sent an army of 20,000 men under Sakharam Bapu with Vithal Shivdeo, Tatyā Gangadhar (Holkar's diwan) and Antaji Mankeshwar. They came to terms with Suraj Mal, and recovered without much difficulty the districts assigned to them in the Doab from Najib Khan and the emperor. Shuja-ud-daulah of Avadh remained indifferent. The wazir Imad-ul-mulk, fretting like the emperor against Najib Khan who as the agent of the Abdali treated them with scant respect, renewed his alliance with the Marathas. In June Raghunath Rao had written to Najib Khan from Jaipur demanding the payment of *chauth*. By the end of July, after the Maratha outposts had been re-established in the Doab, Raghunath Rao marched on Delhi. The imperial capital was besieged for more than a month, at the end of which Najib Khan surrendered, and left the city after having resigned his office of mir bakhshi (September 1757). The wazir triumphed over his hated rival with Maratha help, but he thereby exchanged one master for another—Najib Khan for the Marathas.

After the expulsion of Najib Khan Raghunath Rao placed in the hands of his ally Imad-ul-mulk Delhi and the adjoining tracts of the upper Doab, and in consultation with Ahmad Khan Bangash harried the country as far as Garh Mukteswar and Thaneswar between September and December 1757. At the end of January 1758 Raghunath Rao and Malhar Rao met and planned an expedition into the Punjab. It was a sort of retaliatory measure against the Abdali, undertaken at a time when the Punjab was seething with discontent under the government of Timur Shah. Adina Beg, the governor of Jullundur, invited Raghunath Rao to his assistance against Timur Shah, promising him a lakh of rupees for each day of marching and half a lakh for each day of halt. Raghunath Rao accepted the terms and marching on Sirhind, besieged it in March 1758. Here Adina Beg joined him with his own army and a band of free-booters. Sirhind fell after a short siege, and flushed with victory the allies advanced on Lahore. Timur Shah, unable to defend the city, fled away on 19 April; the Marathas captured it the next day. The Afghan fugitives were pursued up to the Chenab and not further, because the country beyond was held

⁸² SPD, XXI, 95, 96, 98, 99, 100, 104, 105, 106, 108. Rajwade, I. 63.

in strength by the Afghan supporters of the Abdali. After the expulsion of the Abdali's officers Raghunath Rao wisely decided to hand over the government of the province to Adina Beg on the promise of his paying an annual tribute of 75 lakhs to the Marathas. Then he left a Maratha army in occupation of Lahore under Sabaji Sindhia and started for Delhi.⁸³ He crossed the Narmada in August and arrived at Poona in September. This expedition of Raghunath Rao has been often described as the conquest of the Punjab, and planting of the Maratha banner on the walls of Attock. But Attock was far off and Maratha troops did not cross the Chenab.

Raghunath Rao's campaign in the Doab and the Punjab from June 1757 to June 1758 had the following results: (1) In the lower Doab the Maratha possessions were regained, but without Sikandrabad and the districts north of it. (2) Suraj Mal promised to pay an annual tribute in lieu of the fort of Agra, which he was allowed to hold; and all his annexations were confirmed. (3) The emperor promised to pay 13 lakhs a year for a Maratha contingent of 5,000 to be maintained for his service. (4) Adina Beg promised an annual subsidy of 75 lakhs. It was, however, all promises that Raghunath had, not money. From Rajputana he had practically got nothing. In the course of his march through Rajputana in June 1757 the Marwar ministers approached him for a settlement between their chief and Sindhia, but since Marwar had been assigned to Sindhia as his sphere of influence by the peshwa he refused to interfere.

HOLKAR IN RAJPUTANA (1758-1759)

After Raghunath Rao's return to Poona Sindhia and Holkar entered Rajputana about the middle of 1758. They secured some money from the rajas of Shahpura, Kotah and Jaipur. In September 1758 Malhar Rao retired to Indore where he fell ill and could not move out for some months. In August 1758 Jankoji Sindhia and his guardian Dattaji Sindhia were ordered by the peshwa to go to Delhi and Lahore to defend the Maratha possessions against the impending attack of the Abdali about which there were persistent rumours.⁸⁴ Malhar Rao after his recovery paid a visit to Poona in January 1759 to dispel the peshwa's suspicion about his loyalty, and having regained his confidence returned to Malwa. There he received the peshwa's order in July 1759 to proceed to Udaipur and force the maharana to pay his promised tribute. But during the absence of the Marathas from Rajputana since December 1758 Madho Singh had met Suraj Mal at

⁸³ SPD, XXI, 150; XXVII, 236; II, 100.

⁸⁴ SPD, II, 93.

Amber (in March 1759) and probably had formed a plan to oust the Maratha outposts from his dominions. Therefore Malhar Rao on receiving the peshwa's command first entered the Jaipur territories, defeated the Rajputs at Lakhori in November 1759 and reduced Barwara after a vigorous siege. But as he was passing from success to success, and hoping to regain the Maratha possessions in Kotah and Bundi, he received an urgent call on 27 December from Dattaji Sindhia to come to his assistance immediately. Ahmad Shah Abdali had already reconquered the Punjab and arrived at Sirhind, where a trial of strength was imminent. So Malhar Rao abruptly closed his Rajputana campaign and left for Delhi on 2 January 1760.⁸⁵

ADVANCE OF AHMAD SHAH ABDALI (1759-1760)

The peshwa had ordered Dattaji to go to Lahore, because the Maratha interests in the Punjab had suffered due to the incapacity of Khwaja Mirza, who had succeeded his father-in-law Adina Beg as governor after his death in October 1758.⁸⁶ Dattaji went as far as Machhiwara, where Khwaja Mirza met him and paid some money by way of tribute. The country was distracted owing to the rise of rebellious chiefs and on the advice of Khwaja Mirza, Dattaji sent Sabaji Sindhia with an army to Lahore to take over the governorship of the province. After a stay of three weeks at Machhiwara he returned towards Delhi in May 1759 because it was difficult to do anything further in that province.

In Delhi Dattaji effected a complete reversal of Holkar's policy in Hindustan. Instead of seeking to draw Najib Khan on to his side he precipitated open hostility with him because that was the intention of the peshwa also.⁸⁷ About Najib Khan the peshwa wrote as follows: "He is ungrateful and treacherous. To let him prosper is like feeding the serpent with milk. If possible he should be destroyed." Entering the Saharanpur district which was Najib's jagir Dattaji plundered the countryside east of the Ganges and besieged Shukartal in June 1759. Skirmishes continued for several months without a pitched battle or decisive results. Shuja-ud-daulah came with an army and offered to mediate, but the parties would not agree.⁸⁸ Shortly after came the news that the Abdali had invaded the Punjab, and having defeated and driven out Sabaji,⁸⁹ had entered Sirhind on 27 November. Dattaji,

⁸⁵ SPD, II, 113. .

⁸⁶ *Aithik Patra Vyavahar*, 166.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 167.

⁸⁸ *Rajwade*, I, 138-46.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 142. *Siyar*, III, 378-79.

therefore, abandoned the siege on 8 December and hastened northward to meet the invader.

Thus the Marathas came face to face with the Afghans in what developed to be a disastrous contest. On 20 December 1759 Dattaji crossed the Jamuna near Panipat, and encountered the vanguard of the Abdali's army four days later at Taraori. Completely defeated, he was forced to fall back on Kunjpura and Sonepat, and finally on Barari-*ghat*, 10 miles north of Delhi, on 4 January 1760. Ahmad Shah crossed the Jamuna over to the Saharanpur side, and having been joined by Najib Khan, Hafiz Rahmat Khan and Dundi Khan slowly moved down the Doab and encamped at Luni, six miles east of Delhi on the other side of the Jamuna. While the two armies were encamped on the two sides of the river, watchful of each other's activities, Najib Khan supported by an Afghan contingent effected a crossing at Barari-*ghat* taking advantage of the carelessness of the Maratha scouts, and took Dattaji's army by surprise. In a disorderly but determined battle that followed, Dattaji was killed and his army was defeated on 9 January 1760. Malhar Rao, who was coming to his assistance from Rajputana arrived too late to retrieve the situation.⁹⁰

SADASHIV RAO'S NORTH INDIAN EXPEDITION

The peshwa, jubilant over his recent victory over the Nizam at Udgir received a rude shock when the news of the Maratha disasters in the north reached him. So he held consultations with his generals at Pat-dur and, though at first inclined to select Raghunath Rao to lead the Maratha armies against the Abdali, finally changed his mind in favour of Sadashiv Rao, popularly called Bhau Saheb. The reason was that Raghunath had added by his campaigns in north India 80 lakhs to the peshwa's already heavy debts, whereas Sadashiv Rao was the hero of Udgir. But Sadashiv Rao had never seen warfare in north India and was not conversant with the politics of Hindustan, whereas Raghunath Rao had conducted two campaigns there in recent years. However, according to the peshwa's decision Sadashiv Rao, associated with Vishwas Rao, started from Sindkhed about 25 March 1760 at the head of 30,000 regular troops, including 8,000 sepoys trained on European lines under Ibrahim Khan Gardi. The munitions supplied to him were inadequate and the money even more so. The Udgir campaign had cost the peshwa much; the Nizam had not paid the indemnity promised. The soldiers were in arrears of pay and without proper equipment for a long campaign in north India.

⁹⁰ SPD, II, 111, 112, 113, 117; XXI, 181, 182, 183, 185; XXVII, 247. Rajwade, I, 147, 150, 157, 165.

With these serious handicaps, *viz.* inadequate supply of money and munitions of war, and soldiers ill-equipped and unpaid, Sadashiv Rao started to redeem Maratha honour against the encroachments of the Abdali. He crossed the Narmada on 13 April, reached Sironj on 6 May, and arrived at Gwalior on 30 May. Crossing the Chambal, he halted about ten miles below Dholpur for a month till 12 July.⁹¹ Here he met Suraj Mal and here his standards were joined by large Maratha armies under Malhar Rao, Jankoji Sindhia, Damaji Gaikwad and Yawant Rao Pawar, accompanied by numerous Pindaris in their train. Here he learnt that Ahmad Shah Abdali had severely defeated Malhar Rao at Sikandrabad on 4 March, and having swept the Marathas out of the upper Doab had seized Koil and the adjacent fort of Ramgarh, which Suraj Mal had well stocked with provisions and munitions of war for making it the headquarters of his possessions in the upper Doab and trans-Ganges regions. The Abdali's task had been completed by Najib Khan who had taken all the Maratha outposts in the lower Doab. The Bhau Saheb also came to know that the Abdali had invited the Rajput princes Suraj Mal and Shuja-ud-daulah to join his standard and fight against the Marathas.⁹² With surprise he learnt that Najib Khan had induced Shuja-ud-daulah to join the Abdali, in spite of his letters in which he had reminded the nawab of Avadh of the friendship between his father and the Marathas and had assured him that the Marathas wanted to restore the Timmids to their ancestral throne and to make him *the* wazir.⁹³ While Shuja-ud-daulah had preferred to join the invader, the Rajput princes preferred to sit on the fence.

In May 1760 the peace negotiations opened by Hafiz Rahmat Khan on behalf of the Abdali with Malhar Rao and Suraj Mal at Mathura broke down owing to the extravagant demands of the latter.⁹⁴ Shortly afterwards the Bhau Saheb's plan to cross the Jamuna by a bridge of boats and drive the invaders out of the Doab failed owing to the incapacity of Govind Ballal and the early setting in of the monsoon that raised the water-level of the river.⁹⁵ The Bhau Saheb now fell back on the only course left to him, *viz.* to capture Delhi from the Abdali's governor when the Abdali himself could not cross over to this side of the Jamuna. He would thereby hold the western bank of the river and gradually move northward, consolidating his position as far as

⁹¹ Rajwade, I, 171, 174, 176, 196, 199. SPD. II, 126.

⁹² SPD. XXI, 187.

⁹³ Rajwade, I, 180, 204, 205, 215, 217(a), 227.

⁹⁴ Ibid, 199.

⁹⁵ Ibid, 186, 187, 216, 217.

the Punjab till the Abdali's line of communication was cut off. In that case Ahmad Shah would be stranded in the Doab and rendered helpless. The plan was admirably conceived, and had it materialized Panipat would not have occurred.

The Bhau Saheb moved quickly on Delhi, which after a feeble resistance surrendered on 2 August.⁹⁶ The capture of the capital not only restored the Maratha prestige but actually dismayed the Abdali and his partisans. He seriously thought of returning home if an honourable peace could be made and the Ruhelas could be assured of safety from the Maratha aggressions. The Bhau Saheb was jubilant over this turn of the tide, and would have been glad to accept the peace terms proposed at this time by Shuja-ud-daulah. He definitely wanted to avoid a pitched battle with the Afghan king owing to his handicaps of inadequate equipment and funds. But the talks about peace proposals antagonized Imad-ul-mulk and Suraj Mal, who went away from their camps at Tughlaqabad to Bollabaghgarh without even taking formal leave of the Bhau Saheb and would not return even on request. Further, the peshwa's instructions were against any peace with the Abdali based on the cession of the Punjab, and the Abdali could not be persuaded to accept anything less than that. Perforce the Bhau Saheb had to prepare for a final trial of strength even though he had no ally after the defection of Suraj Mal.

There is some truth in the allegation that the Bhau Saheb insulted Suraj Mal and Malhar Rao when he rejected their advice about the strategy to be adopted against the Afghans. Besides, owing to his arrogance Malhar Rao might have felt that if the Brahmins of Poona defeated the Abdali they would 'make him and other captains of the Maratha caste wash their soiled clothes'. There was no love lost between Suraj Mal and the Marathas, who had been extorting money from him since 1754 and because of which the Maratha diplomacy to enlist his help failed.⁹⁷

While Suraj Mal held aloof and Malhar Rao smarted under the treatment accorded to him, Govind Pant Bundele did not send the money that was necessary for Bhau Saheb's army in spite of repeated reminders from the latter.⁹⁸ During the monsoon months that Bhau Saheb spent in Delhi his growing need for money created many complications. He was forced to strip all the silver off the ceiling of the

⁹⁶ Ibid, 224.

⁹⁷ SPD, XXI, 190.

⁹⁸ Rajwade, I, 224, 228, 229, 230. Even when he was near Dholpur he sent repeated requisitions for money which Govind Ballal could not supply. See Rajwade, I, 206, 207, 211, 216, etc.

Diwani khas in the fort of Delhi to melt it into coins, and to plunder the tombs and shrines of the Muslim saints and emperors, a step that greatly enraged the people. But what he got thereby was only a drop in the ocean. The stoppage of supplies from the Doab which was in the Abdali's occupation, and from the fertile country of the Jats who had been alienated, reduced the Maratha camp to such straits that the Bhau Saheb pathetically wrote to the peshwa early in September: "There is starvation in my camp, but no loan can be had; no revenue is being paid to me by any kamavisdar in spite of my frequently writing to them. My troops are going through many a fast." On 15 September it was reported from the Maratha camp: "Even big men are fasting. There is no life left in any man or horse."⁹⁹ Despite such wailings in the Maratha camp, the peshwa could not send any relief whatsoever, because he himself was over-burdened with debt of a crore and a half. He expected the Bhau Saheb not merely to subsist on the tribute to be paid by the chiefs of north India and on revenues from the territories of the Doab assigned to the Marathas, but to send him some money to pay off a part of his debts.

The Bhau Saheb had received nothing from the Rajputs and the Jats by way of tribute. Govind Ballal Bunde had paid him nearly 3 lakhs and all the silver taken from the Diwan Khas had brought him 9 lakhs.¹⁰⁰ Besides these amounts a lakh given to him at Patduri while starting for the campaign and nearly two lakhs given to him at Sironj by the peshwa's bankers were all the money he had received during the seven months that he had so far spent in this campaign. During the next three months and before the battle of Panipat he got 7 lakhs as foot from Kunjpura and a little more than a lakh from Naro Shankar in Delhi. In all, during this long campaign from March 1760 to January 1761 he received only 22½ lakhs whereas he needed at least 72 lakhs to feed and maintain a camp of nearly half a million souls. Thus financial difficulties seriously handicapped his activities. Perhaps, he did not realize that safety lay in retreating from Delhi, although that would have meant avoiding final issues. Hence, in spite of his constantly distressing need for money he left Naro Shankar in charge of Delhi with a Maratha contingent to support him and moved on with his main army and artillery to Barari-ghat.

There he halted for two months from 12 August to 10 October, blocking the way for the Afghans to cross over to this side of the Jamuna. During these two months there was much distress, confusion and even defection in the Abdali's camp. Food and fodder were diffi-

⁹⁹ SPD, II, 130-31.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, XXVII, 247.

cult to procure. In his pressing need for money Ahmad Shah required the help of Shuja-ud-daulah who now regretted having joined him.¹⁰¹ Ahmad Khan Bangash and Sadullah Khan Ruhela began to intrigue with the Bhau Saheb and Govind Ballal Bundele. Some of the Turki troops even left and offered their services to the Marathas. Harassed by these difficulties Ahmad Shah even countenanced Shuja-ud-daulah to open negotiations with the Bhau Saheb. But the latter, apprised of the difficulties of the Afghan king, did not accept any reasonable terms of compromise. On the other hand, to increase his difficulties and alarm the Bhau Saheb next thought of seizing Kunjpura, which was a supply depot for the Afghan army and a half-way house between the Afghan camp in the upper Doab and the Punjab. Besides, if Kunjpura with its vast stores was taken, the distress for want of food supply in the Maratha camp would come to an end. Therefore the Bhau Saheb marched on Kunjpura on 16 October and took it by storm, while the Afghans, unable to cross the river in flood, could not send any assistance. The enormous quantities of grain and 7 lakhs of cash that the Marathas got there came as a great relief to them.¹⁰² For a month there was pleasure and plenty in the Maratha camp.

When the Bhau Sahel marched on Kunjpura he detached Nana Purandare and Appaji Jadhav to reinforce Naro Shankar in Delhi which was his base. That was also calculated to secure his line of communication. After the arrival of reinforcements Naro Shankar deposed Shah Jahan III, whom Imad-ul-mulk had set up as puppet emperor after murdering Alamgir II on 29 November,¹⁰³ proclaimed the absent prince Ali Gauhar as emperor with the title Shah Alam II, and appointed Shuja-ud-daulah as his wazir in order to lure him away from the Abdali's side.¹⁰⁴ Having secured his base and the line of communication along the west bank of the Jamuna, the Bhau Saheb ordered Govind Ballal Bundele to raid the territories of the Ruhelas and Shuja-ud-daulah and strike terror in the Doab.¹⁰⁵ Then he started for Kurukshetra on 25 October, leaving a strong detachment to hold Kunjpura. But as he approached Taraori he learnt to his surprise that the Abdali had crossed the Jamuna in his rear at Baghpat,¹⁰⁶ and arrived at Sonepat. The fact was that when the Marathas were busy ransacking the deposits at Kunjpura and celebrating the Dashera fes-

¹⁰¹ Rajwade, I, 246.

¹⁰² Ibid, I, 265. SPD, XXI, 193.

¹⁰³ Intizam-ud-daulah was also murdered (30 November).

¹⁰⁴ Rajwade, I, 258, 259.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 260, 261.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, 261.

tival which fell on 19 October they had slackened their usual vigilance, and Ahmad Shah had taken advantage of their carelessness. He had discovered an unguarded ford and as the Bhau Saheb with the main army left for Kurukshetra he effected a crossing (25-27 October). Driving away the Maratha outposts as he advanced, Ahmad Shah halted at Sonepat from 28 October to 30 October. The Bhau Saheb, therefore, had to fall back on Panipat on 29 October. His line of communication had been cut off and his rear threatened. On the first day of November the Afghan army was sighted within 7 miles south of his position. The two armies now confronted each other for a final trial of strength.¹⁰⁷

THIRD BATTLE OF PANIPAT

For about two months and a half—till the conclusive battle on 14 January 1761—the two armies faced each other in entrenched positions, fought skirmishes and tried to cut off each other's lines of communication and supplies. During the first half of this period the Marathas had better luck and were in a position of advantage. "All our troops are confident that in four to eight days the Abdali, Najib and Shuja would be destroyed", wrote Krishnaji Joshi from Panipat on 5 November.¹⁰⁸ Both sides soon realized that victory in this trial of strength would rest with the party that succeeded in starving out and outlasting the other. The Bhau Saheb had correctly guessed that if the upper Doab, from where Ahmad Shah got his supplies, could be dominated by the Marathas (it had been practically denuded of Afghan troops) and the trans-Ganges region which was the home of the Afghans could be harried, the enemy would be ruined. He assigned this task to Govind Pant.¹⁰⁹ But his incapacity demonstrated on many occasions held out little hope of success. At Panipat the roving guerilla bands from both sides encountered each other and fought skirmishes; the Afghans, though outclassed at first, ultimately prevailed over the Marathas. In one such encounter on 7 December Balwant Rao Mahendele, the Bhau Saheb's right-hand man, was killed.¹¹⁰ After his death the southward road to Delhi which was the life-line of the Marathas, was blocked. In the rear Kunjpura was seized by Dilir Khan Ruhela with all the grain stored for the Maratha camp. By the middle of November, when the Bhau

¹⁰⁷ Rajwade, I, 264.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 265.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 260, 261, 263, 264.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 272. *Aithasik Patra Vyavahar* 447.

Saheb needed 400 maunds of gun-powder and 100 maunds of cannon balls, because much of these had been wasted through random cannonade,¹¹¹ he could not get even a fraction of what he needed. On 22 December came the most depressing news that Govind Ballal Bundele in his adventure to dominate the Doab had been killed by a detachment that Ahmad Shah had sent there to counteract the designs of the Marathas.¹¹²

The conjunction of these adverse circumstances had made the isolation of the Maratha camp complete by the third week of December. On 2 December the Bhau Saheb received a supply of Rs 1,10,000 from Naro Shankar; that was the only, as well as the last, supply of money from Delhi. After this nothing was received from any quarter. Not even fodder and fuel were available. A camp in which combatants and non-combatants came to nearly half a million souls found itself cooped up in an entrenched position with all its supply lines cut off and men and beasts dying of starvation by hundreds every day. Even the air became foul with the stench. As the situation became unbearable the Bhau Saheb appealed to Shuja-ud-daulah to arrange for peace on any terms, but Najib's influence with the Abdali cut off the prospects of a settlement.¹¹³

As the baffled Maratha envoys returned from the Afghan camp, Ahmad Shah prepared for battle. On 13 January 1761 the Maratha soldiers and officers surrounded the Bhau Saheb's tents, and in their intolerable agony of hunger and misery urged him to lead them into battle, and see what fate had ordained for them. It was the cry of despair of a famished and demoralized army, and in sheer helplessness the Bhau Saheb made a last appeal to Shuja-ud-daulah to arrange a settlement. At midnight he sent his favourite valet Balakram to Kashiraj, Shuja's clerk, with the message: "The flood has risen above my head. If anything can be done, do it now or inform me plainly at once, for hereafter there will be no time for writing or speaking." The message left little doubt that the Marathas were prepared for a last encounter, but the appeal was fruitless. Shuja-ud-daulah immediately informed Ahmad Shah that the Marathas were coming out to fight. The Afghan king rode out and realized that the information was correct. In the early hours of the next fateful day (14 January 1761) the whole line of the Marathas was astir. They were marching out in battle array for a final trial

¹¹¹ Rajwade, I, 268.

¹¹² Ibid, III, 511. *Atihasik Patra Vyavahar*, 447, p. 463. Elliot and Dowson, VIII, 149.

¹¹³ *Atihasik Patra Vyavahar*, 447, 461-63.

of strength, a month—alas!—too late for the adventure. If they had done so on 14 December when they had life in their body and fire in their soul perhaps the issue would have been different.

The line of the Maratha army in battle array extended east and west along a front of 7 miles, while that of the Afghans faced them along a front of 7½ miles. This difference was due to the numerical superiority of the Afghans, who were 60,000 as against 45,000 Marathas. But this numerical superiority of the Afghans had its significance heightened by the fresh reinforcement received from Kabul shortly before the battle, by the quality of their soldiers who had not only been better fed but had better mounts and accoutrement, and by their more efficient and mobile artillery comprising 40 light field-pieces of 2,000 swivel guns carried on camel-back. The Maratha troops, apart from starvation for weeks previous to the battle were extremely ill-clad for the winter of the Punjab, and their mounts were sorry ponies of the Deccan, starved almost to skeletons. The artillery of the Marathas comprised 200 heavy pieces which could not be easily moved and used after the battle began. Their rockets made more noise than execution; and 800 musketeers of Ibrahim Khan Gardi could not do any effective work unless properly supported by the cavalry. The Bhau Saheb's blind reliance on the training and tactics of Ibrahim's men had prompted him to reject the advice of Suraj Mal, who had urged him to leave the heavy artillery and camp equipage behind and resort to the Maratha method of guerilla warfare. Yet the Bhau Saheb knew from the very start of the campaign that he had not been supplied with sufficient ammunition.

The military disposal of the two sides was on the following lines. The Bhau Saheb with Vishwas Rao took post in the centre. The field guns were planted in the van and there was no reserve in the rear. Ibrahim Khan's entire division of musketeers was posted on the left and Malhar Rao with Jankoji Sindhia on the right, to avoid any contact between Ibrahim Khan and Malhar Rao who had quarrelled and almost come to blows a few days before the battle. The disciplined musketeers could not play a decisive part in the battle because they were assembled in one place instead of being distributed along the entire front judiciously mixed up with the cavalry. The Bhau Saheb's divisional generals were expected to act on their own initiative without receiving any reinforcements or fresh directions from him during the changing course of the battle. Ahmad Shah's dispositions followed a very different plan. He posted his artillery in the van; Shah Pasand Khan, Najib Khan and Shuja-ud-

daulah on the left; Barkhurdar Khan and Amir Beg Khan with the Ruhela and Mughal contingents on the right; and Shah Wali Khan, his prime minister, with the pick of his own troops in the centre. At the same time he posted 5,000 of his own troops on each of his right and left wings to forestall any untoward inclination of his Indo-Muslim allies to desert to the Marathas, and also to render ineffective the flanking tactics of the Marathas. About two miles in the rear he himself watched the engagement with a reserve to throw in when and where it was needed. He himself controlled the movements of the entire army during the course of the battle.

The action began with a cannonade by the Maratha gunners, who missed their mark, so that their shots fell harmlessly behind the Afghan lines. The weapon on which the Bhau Saheb had so much relied failed him on this critical occasion. Ahmed Shah wisely reserved his powder and shots for a more appropriate moment. After the cannonade Ibrahim Khan attacked the Afghan right wing. His sepoys made a fierce bayonet charge which threw the Ruhelas off their ground. They were killed in large numbers and had their commander wounded. As it uncovered the Afghan centre the Bhau Saheb attacked with dash and determination. The terrific impact of that attack made the Afghans reel and break into flight. But at this critical moment he could neither send any cavalry support to complete Ibrahim Khan's work, nor could the artillery be moved and directed on the broken Afghan lines with deadly effect. Still the numbers killed among the Afghans were enormous. As they fell back and ran for life it appeared as if the Marathas would win. This continued till noon. On the right to the Maratha lines Holkar and Sindhia were only watching Najib-ud-daulah's movements.

Ahmad Shah, who had so far withheld his reserves of men and munitions, now sent them where they were needed. He immediately ordered his mounted military police of 1,500 men to rally the retreating Afghans and his own body guard to reinforce them. Together they numbered nearly 13,000 of whom 3,000 were ordered to the support of Shah Pasand Khan at the centre. With the arrival of these reserves a determined counter-attack was launched by the Afghans all along the line. That was just after the midday, when the Marathas, starving for days and without food or drink since the morning, sorely needed respite to cook and eat some food. Their caste rules did not permit them to carry food and water with them like the Afghans. At this moment of physical fatigue the counter-attack was pressed home and the Marathas gradually yielded ground. As his centre and right were restored Ahmad Shah sent three squad-

rons of matchlock men of 1,200 each to envelop the centre, and ordered Najib Khan and Shah Pasand Khan to fall upon the Maratha right.

At quarter past 2 p.m. Vishwas Rao was shot dead, and at the sight of his dead nephew the Bhau Saheb lost his balance of mind and resolution. Forgetting the responsibilities of his position and the momentous issues which were hanging on his judgement and activities on that fateful day, he plunged headlong into the battle ranks eager to find death like a common soldier. All along the line, and mostly in the centre, the Marathas had begun to run, in spite of the Bhau Saheb's efforts to rally them. He had no reserve to reinforce them, although it was reinforcement rather than personal heroism that was sorely needed to hearten the Marathas to hold on and face the Afghans. At this psychological hour appeared the last deadly weapon of Ahmad Shah, his 1,500 camel-borne swivel guns, which completely paralysed the Maratha resistance and did short work of those who still dared to hold the field. Within less than another hour—by 3 p.m.—all was over. The Marathas broke and fled pell-mell in all directions. The field was strewn with enormous heaps of the dead and the dying. The Bhau Saheb had fought valiantly and three horses had fallen under him. He had been wounded on the thigh but not killed. As he limped on in the field with the help of a spear 5 Durrani horsemen, attracted by his splendid dress and jewels, surrounded him. He struck three of them and was ultimately overpowered and killed. As the end of the battle had drawn near Malhar Rao had fled away leaving Jankoji to his fate. Yawant Rao Pawar and Pilaji Jadhav fell fighting at the right wing and Shamshir Bahadur who had been wounded escaped to the Jat country where he died at Dig.

The loss and humiliation suffered by the Marathas were unprecedented. But the Bhau Saheb could have made the disaster less dreadful if he had some plan for an orderly retreat at least for the non-combatants. Such a plan was specially needed because the final issue of the battle was practically certain from the very start. But as S. J. Cole says "he was a fool" he had staked everything on a "gamble". When he led his famished army into battle he had not retained any reserve to strengthen its weakening ranks nor had he reserved the central command for himself so as to ensure unity of leadership. Such grievous mistakes made the victory of Ahmad Shah inevitable and the Maratha disaster complete. The Afghans pursued the Marathas for 20 miles till the

moon set at 9 p.m. that evening. The next day the Maratha camp was given up to plunder.¹¹⁵

CONSEQUENCES OF MARATHA DEFEAT

On the stricken field fell Vishwas Rao, the Bhau Sahib, Yawant Rao Pawar, Tukoji Sindhia and Santaji Wagh, besides many other chiefs of lesser note, with 28,000 soldiers. Jankoji Sindha and Ibrahim Khan were taken wounded and put to death. Antaji Mankeshwar was killed during his flight by the Raluch landlords of Farrukhnagar. Non-combatants to the number of 22,000 were taken as slaves; 500 horses, 2,00,000 draught cattle, 500 elephants and an enormous number of camels were captured. Large quantities of jewellery and cash were seized from the Maratha camp.

Far greater than these material losses was the loss of prestige. The Marathas had shrunk from an encounter with the Afghans in 1757; they had not dared take post on the Indus in 1759, and now they were completely beaten. An imperial power unable to defend the line of the Indus had no right to rule over north India. Already the people in north India hated the Marathas for their utter disregard of the human sufferings caused by their plundering raids and wanton destruction. Now it was plain that they could not be trusted for a single encounter with the Central Asian invaders against whom the Rajputs had fought for centuries.

There has been a tendency among the Maratha historians to belittle the consequences of Panipat.¹¹⁶ These consequences could be judged in their proper perspective if we imagine what would have happened if the Marathas had defeated Ahmad Shah as disastrously as they themselves had been defeated. The road to further invasion of India from the north-west would have been closed; the Punjab would have fallen under Maratha domination and the rise of the Sikh power interrupted; the Doab as also the territories of the Ruhelas and the subah of Allahabad would have been annexed to the Maratha dominions; Shuja-ud-daulah, the Jats and the Rajputs would have submitted to Maratha ascendancy. In the south the Nizam would not have dared trifle with the Marathas as he did subsequently. Even the English in Bengal and Madras would have had a wholesome respect for them. From their complete domination over north India the flow of money into the coffers of the peshwa would have been continuous, and his government would have been rescued from the grip of that 'consumption of debt' to which it had

¹¹⁵ For discussion of sources see Sarkar, *op. cit.* 269-74.

¹¹⁶ See Sardesai, *New History of the Marathas*, II, 454-56.

for long been a victim. Certainly Nana Sahib would not have died lamenting the death of his eldest son so soon as he did.

DEATH OF BALAJI BAJI RAO

As a stroke of Providence as it were, the months after Udgir saw the peshwa gradually drawn into the jaws of a wasting disease. As his health and vigour were undermined his mental happiness departed owing to family quarrels, pressure of the creditors, bankruptcy of his government, and slowly percolating news from the north that things had not been going on very well there. Abiding gloom settled over his disposition and people persuaded him to marry for the second time in order that in the company of a younger wife his worries might be diverted.¹¹⁷ The marriage was celebrated on 27 December 1760, and shortly after he planned an expedition to north India. He sent Raghumath Rao and Sakharam Bapu to persuade Nizam Ali to join him, but since Nizam Ali would not come he started alone. At Bhilsa, on 24 January 1761, he learnt from an intercepted letter of a banker from Delhi the fatal news of Panipat. In enigmatic language the letter described the disaster as follows: "Two pearls have been dissolved twenty-seven gold mohurs have been lost; and of the silver and copper the total cannot be cast up." The peshwa proceeded as far as Pachhar, 32 miles north of Sironj, and there he met the fugitives from Panipat. Their tales of suffering and slaughter unhinged his mind and consumption hastened the decay of his body. On 22 March he left Pachhar and reached Poona in June, reduced to a skeleton by his fatal disease. The end came on 23 June. The bewilderment of the blow of Panipat that had brought bereavement to nearly every home in Maharashtra was heightened by the peshwa's premature death.

ABDALLI'S PEACE OFFER

After his victory Ahmad Shah spent a few days at Panipat and returned to Delhi to give some rest to his army. He occupied the imperial palace with his harem and lived in rest and enjoyment for a month and a half till the middle of March. Though he had won and the peshwa had lost, he sought to placate the defeated antagonist by assuring him that he wanted only the Punjab to the west of the Sutlej, restoration of the Mughal emperor to his sovereignty, a promise of safety to the Ruhelas, and an agreed peace on these terms with him. He wanted to convey his condolences to the peshwa.

¹¹⁷ SPD. XXI, 196; XXVII, 260.

for the death of his son and cousin which was the inevitable result of the battle forced on him, he said, by the Bhau Saheb. With these intentions he sent his envoy Yaqub Ali Khan to meet the peshwa's agent Bapuji Hingne, Tatya Gangadhar (Holkar's *diwan*) and Suraj Mal at Mathura. They were joined by envoys from Shuja-ud-daulah, Najib Khan and Ahmad Khan Bangash. After prolonged discussions the parties failed to come to an agreement. Therefore Yaqub Ali Khan wanted to proceed to Poona to negotiate directly with the peshwa, but he was prevented by Tatya Gangadhar and Imad-ul-mulk on the ground that the peshwa had been suffering from mental derangement and was about to die. Thus ended the futile negotiations for peace and it is a pity that the Poona court did not take advantage of the pacific and friendly intentions of the Afghan conquerer.

CHAPTER TWELVE

PESHWA MADHAV RAO I

CRISIS OF 1761

THE ANNIHILATION of the Maratha army in the third battle of Panipat on 14 January 1761, followed by the premature death of Balaji Baji Rao on 23 June 1761, seemed to foreshadow the immediate dissolution of the Maratha empire. Contemporary Marathi letters contain a graphic and distressing picture of the sudden revolt against Maratha domination everywhere in Hindustan—in the Gangetic Doab, Bundelkhand, Rajputana and Malwa. The anti-Maratha movement in north India was not confined to comparatively humble chieftains. Shuja-ud-daulah of Avadh had his eyes on Bundelkhand. Najib Khan Ruhela, who was more responsible than any northern chieftain for the Maratha disaster at Panipat, controlled the imperial administration in the name of the refugee emperor, Shah Alam II. Suraj Mal Jat, exceptionally strong in military as well as financial resources, sought territorial expansion. Madho Singh of Jaipur adopted an aggressive policy. In the rich Gangetic plain in eastern India the white merchants from beyond the distant seas made good use of their opportunity to consolidate their power. The eclipse of Maratha power in north India naturally cast its shadow in the Deccan as also in the far south. For the ambitious ruler of Hyderabad, smarting under the severe blows inflicted by the triumphant Marathas after the battle of Udgir, Panipat provided an unexpected opportunity of retaliation and recovery. Beyond the Krishna the rising usurper of Mysore counted upon the inevitable collapse of Maratha power.

This was undoubtedly the greatest crisis in the history of the Marathas. Seventy years earlier a similar crisis had confronted them: Sambhaji was dead, and the new-born Maratha state was about to be crushed by Aurangzib, then apparently at the height of his power. But in 1761 the Marathas had to reckon with enemies all over India, and their political and military responsibilities were incomparably greater. They could no longer conceal themselves in their native

hills or take shelter in isolated forts. From Delhi to Seringapatam, from Bombay to Cuttack—their far-flung empire had to be protected.

Could the peshwa family provide a leader capable of dealing with this Herculean task? The legitimate successor to the peshwaship was a boy of seventeen.¹ Madhav Rao, the second son of Balaji Baji Rao, for his elder brother, Vishwas Rao, had fallen at Panipat. He was placed on the gaddi² with the formal approval of the nominal chhatrapati of Satara. It was obvious that a boy having no experience of political affairs could not be the *de facto* ruler of an empire virtually threatened with extinction. A strong regent was required, and Raghunath Rao, the eldest surviving member of the peshwa family, was chosen. He had not yet given any proof of more than average capacity; indeed, his expeditions to north India in the days of Balaji Baji Rao had been spectacular rather than successful. He was, as Grant Duff says, 'naturally fond of power'.³ A man of weak character, he was usually guided by the advice of others, among whom his ambition; and unscrupulous wife Anandi Bai occupied a prominent place. It was under such a leader that the Marathas had to take up the task of recovering their military power and political prestige.

INVASION OF NIZAM ALI

The first task of the new government was to repulse the invasion of Nizam Ali, who was then the *diwan* of his brother Salabat Jang the nizam of Hyderabad. He was the *de facto* ruler of the Hyderabad state in 1761; a year later he became the *de jure* nizam Salabat Jang being deposed, confined, and finally murdered. As soon as the news of the tragic disaster of Panipat reached the Deccan Nizam Ali began to negotiate with his neighbours—the English Murar Rao Ghorpade, the Pathan nawabs of Karnul, Cudappah and Savanur as also disgruntled Maratha chieftains such as Hanumant Rao Nimbalkar and Ramchandra Jadhav.⁴ After Balaji Baji Rao's death he came to Bidar and made open preparations to invade the peshwa's territory. Poona was fully aware of his aggressive designs. By November 1761 about 125,000 troops were assembled. Raghunath Rao and the peshwa had already proceeded towards the Godavari. It was

1 According to Grant Duff (ed. Edwardes, I, 576) Madhav Rao was born in August 1744, but Sardesai (*Riyasat, Madhva*, IV, 1) says that he was born on 16 February 1745.

2 Grant Duff (I, 533) says that the investiture at Satara took place in September, but Sardesai (IV, 2) says that it took place on 20 July.

3 Ed. Edwardes, I, 533.

4 SPD, XXXVIII, 9, 10, 27. Khare. *Aithik Lekha Sangraha*, 1, 36, 38.

decided to follow guerilla tactics till a good opportunity was available for open fight.⁵

As Nizam Ali advanced towards Poona with about 60,000 troops the homeland of the Marathas appeared to be in grave danger. The English factors of Bombay, who were usually well-informed about the strength and weakness of the neighbouring country powers, observed in their Secret Consultation of 14 December 1761: "We well know that Nizam Ali is now near Poona, that the Brahmins cannot raise a force sufficient to oppose him, from the backwardness of their own officers (who look upon the situation of Nanna's family as desperate), and the low state of their finances,⁶ Tarra Boy (the Sow Rajah's widow) and all the Marathas at the bottom are against them, and would show it at a proper occasion." Nizam Ali's advantages, however, were really not so decisive.

The morale of the invading army was worn out by the skirmishes in which the Marathas excelled, and also by the scarcity of supplies. Moreover, by destroying the Hindu temples at Toka, a village upon the Godavari, he lost the support of the Maratha chiefs like Ramchandra Jadhav, who refused to tolerate this insult to their religion and joined the peshwa. Early in December 1761 Nizam Ali came near Poona. A decisive battle took place in January 1762 and resulted in his defeat. Many prominent Maratha chiefs advised Raghunath Rao to take this opportunity of crushing the power of Hyderabad; but the regent was not willing to do it, for he was already anticipating a struggle for power with his young nephew.⁷ He decided to offer very favourable terms to Nizam Ali, whose good-will and assistance he wanted to utilize later in safeguarding his own position. An accommodation took place between the peshwa and Nizam Ali in January 1762. The terms cannot be definitely ascertained;⁸ but there is no doubt that Nizam Ali's military position did not justify the advantages secured by him. Although credit is due to Raghunath Rao for his successful defence of the Maratha homeland against so powerful an enemy at a moment of overall crisis in Maratha affairs, yet it must be recognized that he remained satisfied with a half-hearted campaign and an unfavourable peace. The military position was so favourable to the Marathas that in all probability he could have inflicted a severe defeat on Nizam Ali and thereby secured

⁵ SPD, XXXVIII, 14, 15, 18, 19, 21, 25, 26. Khare, I, 36, 57

⁶ The Maratha government's debt at the time of Balaji's death was about one and a half crores. See Khare, I, 55.

⁷ SPD, XXXVIII, 29, 30, 32, 35, 43, 44, 47, 50, 54. Khare, I, 45, 46, 49, 50, 52.

⁸ For conflicting statements on this point see A.C. Banerjee, *Peshwa Madhav Rao I*, 17-18.

considerable territorial concessions. It is to be regretted that with a view to securing a potential ally in his coming struggle for power he tried to conciliate the invader by undeserved leniency.

The invasion of Nizam Ali synchronized with an important episode in the history of Anglo-Maratha relations. The growing coolness between the Marathas and the English factors of Bombay⁹ during the last years of Balaji Baji Rao⁹ naturally coloured the mutual relations of the two powers immediately after his death. The successes won by the English in Karnatak as well as in Bengal¹⁰ strengthened their position and made them more self-confident. On the other hand, the disaster at Panipat, the death of Balaji Baji Rao, the accession of a minor to the peshwa's gaddi and Nizam Ali's invasion appeared to be clear indications of the growing Maratha weakness.¹¹ Naturally the English merchants tried to exploit the difficulties of the Marathas, who were compelled to act, for the time being at least, on the defensive. Raghunath Rao wanted to secure some assistance from Bombay on the eve of Nizam Ali's invasion. An agreement was concluded on 14 September 1761; although substantial concessions were made to the English and their ally, the Sidi of Janjira, the Marathas received nothing in return.¹² Grant Duff rightly describes it as 'rather an assurance of civility and friendship than a definite treaty'.

Soon after the conclusion of this agreement Raghunath Rao sent Baji Gangadhar Pant to carry on negotiations with the Bombay council. He wanted 2,000 European soldiers with 15 field pieces. The members of the Bombay council were convinced that without their assistance the Marathas would be 'completely worsted' in the impending contest with Nizam Ali. So they pressed for the cession of Salsette and Bassein which were valuable 'not only on account of the advantages expected from the revenue, but as advanced positions essentially necessary to the security of the island and harbour of Bombay'. The Maratha government agreed to the cession of Salsette only under certain conditions, which the Bombay council refused to accept. The negotiations failed¹³ and, as we have seen, the Marathas were able to repulse Nizam Ali's attack without the assistance of English troops and guns.

⁹ See Forrest, *Selections from Bombay Records*, Maratha Series, I, Introduction.

¹⁰ Pondicherry fell in January 1761. Mir Jafar was replaced as nawab by Mir Qasim in September 1760.

¹¹ Bombay Secret Consultations, 14 December 1761.

¹² For the terms of the agreement see Aitchison, *Treaties*, 1863, III, 22-24.

¹³ Bombay Public Department Diary, Vol. 37, pp. 672, 714, 720, 721. Bombay Secret and Political Department Diary, Vol. 7, pp. 121-23. Bombay Political Department Diary, Vol. 8, p. 5; Vol. 9, p. 87.

FIRST KARNATAK EXPEDITION

After the conclusion of peace with Nizam Ali the young peshwa accompanied his uncle in an expedition to Karnatak. The Anglo-French struggle arising out of the Seven Years' War had completely changed the political situation on the east coast. The Nawab of Arcot was a protege of the English East India Company. Salabat Jang had given up the French cause and made an alliance with the English. Pondicherry, threatened by Raghiji Bhonsle in 1741, was now in the hands of the English. Indeed, on the east coast the predominance of the English was well-established, and the peshwa could not think of challenging it. Mysore, however, was free from their grip, and there the Marathas could still hope to find fresh fields and pastures new.

But Mysore had already found her defender. Haidar Ali, an illiterate soldier in the Mysore army, became faujdar of Dindigul in 1755, ousted the dalavai Nanraj in 1760, crushed his last rival Khande Rao in 1761, and became the *de facto* ruler of the state. As a subordinate of Nanraj he had come into close contact with the Marathas. The direct conflict between Haidar and the Marathas began in 1758 when Gopal Rao Patwardhan and Anand Rao Raste invaded Mysore. After months of campaigning the Marathas received 32 lakhs of rupees in lieu of their territorial claims. When the court party under the leadership of Khande Rao made an attempt to bring about Haidar's overthrow, Visaji Krishna lent his services against the usurper. After Panipat, however, Visaji Krishna retired from Mysore, leaving Haidar free to take a terrible revenge on his weakened rival. One of the terms by which Haidar had purchased the timely retreat of the Marathas was the cession of Baramahal, but he refused to implement his promise when the news of Panipat reached Mysore. Thus during the years 1758-61 the Marathas missed a good opportunity of establishing their hold over Mysore. In a Marathi news-letter written in January 1759 we read: "There could never be a more opportune time to complete the conquest of Mysore, torn and distracted as it is by civil feuds and risings all over the province, if a few more troops could be spared."¹⁴ Troops, however, were badly needed for the grand northern expedition against Ahmad Shah Abdali and also for the contest with the nizam culminating in the battle of Udgir; Karnatak was left to take care of itself.

Freed from all rivals at home, and emboldened by the sudden

eclipse of Maratha power in north India, Haidar became aggressive and deliberately tried to extend his frontier towards the Krishna. He found an ally in Basalat Jung, Nizam Ali's disappointed brother, whose ambition was to form an independent principality in Karnatak. The troops of the allies occupied Hoskote, Dod Balapur and Sira during the closing months of the year 1761. This was a serious threat to the Maratha position in Karnatak, for Sira was the chief Maratha depot of provisions and military stores in that region. Haidar shrewdly deprived his ally of the fruits of victory and extended his own conquests. Early in 1762 Chik Balapur, a portion of the territory of Murar Rao Ghorpade of Gutti, Kodi-konda, Penukonda, Madaksira, Raidurg, Harpannalli and Chitaldurg were occupied by the Mysore army. On the whole, Haidar's aggressions in Karnatak deprived the Maratha government of tribute amounting to 50 lakhs of rupees.¹⁵

The first Karnatak expedition¹⁶ of Madhav Rao was intended to check the rising power of Haidar Ali. Under the leadership of Raghunath Rao accompanied by the peshwa and Trimbak Rao Pethe, the Marathas realized tribute from Kittur and Bidnur.¹⁷ In July 1762 there was an engagement with Haidar, who found safety in retreat. His anxiety to avoid open fight made it necessary for the Marathas to encamp in Karnatak during the rainy season. But they were crippled by financial stringency and scarcity of provisions, and Raghunath's quarrel with Trimbak Rao weakened the leadership. So the operations were abandoned; the peshwa followed his uncle to Poona.¹⁸

FIRST CIVIL WAR: RAKSHAS BHUVAN

The dissensions which broke out in the Maratha camp in Karnatak were carried to Poona, where an open struggle for power began after the peshwa's return. Gopika Bai, the peshwa's mother, was anxious to secure for her son a legitimate share in the responsibility of administration, but Raghunath Rao, acting under the astute advice of Sakaram Bapu, opposed her proposal. Compromises proved ineffective; both parties appealed to arms. Raghunath secured the assistance of Nizam Ali. In November 1762 the peshwa was defeated by his uncle in two successive engagements. 'With remarkable foresight and decision' Madhav Rao 'threw himself into

15 SPD, XXXVIII, 74. Khare, II, p. 696. Orme Ms., No. 72.

16 This expedition is not mentioned by Wilks.

17 Grant Duff (I, 536) is not correct in saying that the peshwa 'did not go far beyond the Kistna, if he crossed that river at all'.

18 SPD, XXXVII, 4, 5, 8, 9.

the power of his uncle, as the only means of preventing a complete division in the state. Once again Raghunath Rao became the supreme authority in the Maratha empire. He had to conciliate Nizam Ali by surrendering the fort of Daulatabad. His supporters were appointed to high offices, and those who had supported the peshwa in the last contest were punished.¹⁹

The most prominent victim of Raghunath's wrath was Gopal Rao Patwardhan of Miraj, who was compelled by military force to surrender his jagir.²⁰ The offended chief sought the assistance of the nizam. He was not alone in pursuing this unpatriotic policy. Nizam Ali was joined by Bhawan Rao pratinidhi, Piraji Naik Nimbalkar, Rambandra Jadhav and Janoji Bhonsle of Berar. It was agreed that Janoji would be made regent for the chhatrapati of Satara, and all estates taken from the allied sardars by Raghunath would be restored. The nizam was to get back all the territories on his side of the river Bhima.²¹

The crisis was serious indeed. The news of the nizam's advance compelled the peshwa to give up his plan of leading an expedition to Karnatak. There was a sincere reconciliation between the uncle and the nephew, and the sardars belonging to the two parties followed their example. As the peshwa's army was not strong enough to face Nizam Ali's undivided force, it was decided to avoid open action but to plunder his territories as also those of Bhonsle, and thus to compel them to turn back. This policy was successfully pursued; Berar was plundered and Bidar was burnt. Meanwhile Nizam Ali plundered Poona and ravaged the peshwa's territory. Poona diplomacy succeeded in winning back those discontented Maratha sardars who had joined him. Deserted by Janoji Bhonsle, the bulk of Nizam Ali's army under the command of Vithal Sundar suffered a serious defeat in the battle of Rakshasbhuvan (10 August 1763). The young peshwa took a prominent part in the engagement. The Marathas then besieged Aurangabad, but peace was concluded on 25 September 1763. The nizam had to surrender territory worth 82 lakhs. Districts worth 32 lakhs were given to Janoji Bhonsle. Miraj was restored to Gopal Rao.²²

This treaty deserves to be regarded as a landmark in the history

¹⁹ Khare, I, 71, 73, 85, 89-92, 94, 95, 104; pp. 93, 127, 135-37. SPD, XIX, 6, 7, 11, 13; XX, 129-32.

²⁰ Khare, I, 105-79.

²¹ SPD, XXXVIII, 75, 79, 80, 83.

²² Khare, I, 184, 193, 229, 236, 240, 245, 247, 249, 251, 259, 260-64, 266, 269, 297, 300, 303, 306, 308, 313, 318, 321, 322, 325, 333, 334, 339, 347; pp. 280-85, 289, 298, 349-51. SPD, XXXVII, 85, 86, 95, 96-98, 103. Grant Duff's account of the battle of Rakshasbhuvan is inaccurate.

of the Marathas. So far as the relative positions of the peshwa and the nizam are concerned, the state of things following from it lasted up to the battle of Kharda (1795). Never again did the nizam venture to invade the peshwa's dominions, and in the contest which came 32 years later victory lay with the Marathas. Secondly, the brilliant success of the Marathas impressed the Deccan as well as Hindustan. This was, indeed, the first proclamation of Maratha revival after the disaster of Panipat. Finally, this victory closed the period of Raghunath Rao's regency and marked the beginning of Madhav Rao's independent career.

The growing signs of Maratha revival disturbed the English factors of Bombay, and they tried to secure the friendship of Haidar Ali, the most powerful enemy of the Marathas in the south. Ammunition was supplied to him, and it was decided 'to improve a friendly correspondence with him'. In August 1763 the nawab of Arcot was allowed to build some ships in the English Marine Yard, because 'his having a Marine force may be a good check on the Marathas'.²³

SECOND KARNATAK EXPEDITION

While the Marathas were weakened by internal dissensions and Nizam Ali's second invasion, Haidar Ali extended his frontier at their cost. He conquered Bidnur and Sunda in 1763. The nizam was conciliated by public gifts and bankers' credit for large sums of money. The alliance of the nawab of Savanur was secured 'by the joint power of terror and persuasion'. His territory occupied a position of great strategic importance, for it was situated between the rivers Tungabhadra and Malaprabha, in the direct line of all Maratha armies proceeding to Mysore. Important posts like Ratehalli, Bankapur, Shirhati and Dharwar were occupied in quick succession. Haidar's authority was pushed nearly to the banks of the Krishna.²⁴ This was partly due to the flaws in the Maratha fortifications in Karnatak. As Wilks says, "The apprehension of attack from the south had never entered into the contemplation of the Marathas; the places of strength were unprovided with the means of defence."²⁵

After the conclusion of peace with the nizam in September 1763 the peshwa decided to resist Haidar Ali's northward advance. He personally assumed charge of the expedition, collected a large army and many guns, and crossed the Krishna in February 1764. Manoli

23 Forrest, *Selections from the Bombay Records*, Home Series, II, 124-26.

24 Khare, II, 286, 291, 316, 343, 352, 376, 391.

25 *History of Mysore*, I, 460.

and Hubli were taken by the Marathas. The nawab of Savanur renounced his allegiance to Mysore and came under the peshwa's protection. After an unsuccessful attempt to secure the nizam's active assistance, Haidar took up position near Ratehalli; but the Marathas refrained from attacking him in his chosen position. Haidar was anxious for an open engagement, for he knew that the Marathas would be welcomed by the people of Karnatak 'on account of their having been lately subdued' by him. Gopal Rao Patwardhan succeeded in making Haidar 'the dupe of his own design'. On 3 May 1764 Haidar was trapped into an open engagement, in which he lost more than 1,000 dead and the same number wounded. On the Maratha side not more than 50 soldiers were killed and 200 wounded. Haidar could not forget the lesson of this battle. Afraid to face the Marathas again he retreated to the entrenched fort at Anavatti. The coming of the rains compelled the Marathas to suspend the operations, but instead of returning to Poona they encamped in Karnatak.²⁶

During the rainy season the Marathas defended Savanur against Haidar's attack and occupied Haveri and Dharwar. Haidar received guns and ammunition from Bombay, but the Madras council refused to respond to an appeal from the Marathas, which was supported by the nawab of Arcot.²⁷ Military operations were seriously resumed in November. On the first day of December Haidar Ali was decisively beaten in the battle of Jadi Hanwati. He lost about 2,000 men and was himself wounded. At the peshwa's invitation Raghunath Rao collected fresh troops and came to Karnatak. The peshwa was obviously determined to strike a decisive blow against Haidar Ali. Early in 1765 he took Honnali, Kumsi, Anantapur and Chitradurg. Haidar shut himself up at Bidnur and sued for terms. He knew it would be difficult for the Marathas to advance to Bidnur through 'woods terrible for cavalry'.²⁸

Peace was concluded in March 1765. Haidar engaged to restore all territories taken from Murar Rao Ghorpade, to relinquish all claims on the nawab of Savanur, and to pay 30 lakhs of rupees as tribute. The peshwa insisted on the annexation of Bankapur, but he could not get Basavapatna, which was the key to Bidnur. Wilks describes this treaty as 'an adjustment of extreme moderation, considering the desperate circumstances in which Haidar was placed'. The responsibility for showing so much leniency to so powerful and

26 Khare, II, 411, 415-17, 419, 420, 422, 434, 448, 454. SPD. XXXVII, 15, 24, 27, 28, 30-32, 34, 35, 37. Peixoto, *History of Haidar Ali Khan* (Portuguese), tr. by unknown writer, preserved in the Commonwealth Office. II, 83-91.

27 Madras Military Consultations, Vol. 22A, pp. 111, 113, 146.

28 Khare, II, 509, 510, 511. SPD. XXXVII, 55, 59, 60, 62. Peixoto, II, 18-25.

determined an enemy lay wholly on Raghunath Rao. Wilks says that among the terms 'were without question some secret articles which were the foundation of that good understanding which ever afterwards subsisted' between Haidar and Raghunath Rao.²⁹ Once again guilty ambition at home checked the peshwa's expansionist policy.

EXPEDITION AGAINST BHONSLE

On his return from Karnatak in 1765 the peshwa undertook an expedition against Janoji Bhonsle of Berar. Grant Duff suggests that the peshwa wanted to avert an alliance between Janoji and the nizam.³⁰ Apart from the probability of his concluding a new alliance with the nizam, Janoji had on various grounds incurred the peshwa's displeasure. His conduct since 1761 had no excuse. He had openly fought against the peshwa as an ally of the nizam, and allowed his Muslim ally to burn Poona. Circumstances had compelled the peshwa to buy him off with territory yielding a revenue of 32 lakhs. Even after this reconciliation Janoji did not mend his ways. Instead of joining the peshwa in his Karnatak expedition he intrigued with Haidar Ali. Madhav Rao had also reasons to suspect that Janoji was inclined to encourage and assist Raghunath Rao in his ambitious projects.

It would be wrong to look upon Janoji's recalcitrance as a vassal's usual—and natural—ambition to escape submission to an overlord. His policy was a corollary of the special position of the Bhonsle state in the Maratha confederacy. The 'usurpation'³¹ by the peshwa of the *de facto* headship of the Maratha state was completed during the regime of Balaji Baji Rao. This transfer of power from the king to the leading minister had two important effects.³² In the first place, it led to the abolition of the ashta pradhan council and concentrated authority in the peshwa. Secondly, it created two distinct and separate classes of sardars in the Maratha empire. The old nobility—the Dabhades and the Gaikwads of Gujarat, the Bhonsles of Nagpur—claimed to hold their possessions by virtue of Shahu's sanads and regarded themselves as equals of the peshwas. The new nobility, on the other hand—the Sindhias, the Holkars, the Rastes, the Phadkes, the Patwardhans, the Bundeles, the Purandares—'regarded the Peshwa as the master whose bread they ate and whom they were bound to serve'. Gradually, however, the example of the old nobility in-

²⁹ Khare, II, p. 756; III, 564. SPD. XXVII, 60-63.

³⁰ Ed. Edwardes, I, 547.

³¹ Scott-Waring, *History of the Marathas*, 169.

³² S. N. Sen, *Administrative System of the Marathas*, 1st. ed., 204.

fluenced them, and all sardars came to think of themselves as independent rulers of their own principalities. Thus the Maratha empire was converted from 'an organic whole into an inorganic mass'. Though the sardars joined together on momentous occasions, like the wars against Mysore, the nizam and the English, "the old solidarity of interest became a thing of the past", and this 'loose confederacy of ambitious feudal chiefs' naturally 'failed to evoke that spirit of patriotic co-operation which had achieved such wonderful results' in the past.³³ Traces of this degeneration are clearly visible during Madhav Rao's regime.

In a letter to the nominal emperor Shah Alam Janoji complained that the peshwa had invaded 'the patrimonial territories of His Majesty's bounden servant and vassal'.³⁴ In the days of Balaji Baji Rao the Bhonsles were unwilling to recognize the peshwa's right to levy sardeshmukhi and babti in Berar which they regarded as their special watan.³⁵ In 1743 Shahu made a settlement of the conflicting territorial claims of the peshwa and Raghujji Bhonsle; the entire territory from Berar in the west right up to Orissa, Bengal (including Bihar), and Lucknow was assigned to Raghujji. From these areas he was to realize his 'tributes and other claims' without interference from the peshwa.³⁶ This arrangement worked more or less satisfactorily during the last years of Raghujji's life, but after his death (February 1755) the question of succession provided an occasion for the peshwa's interference in Nagpur affairs. In 1757 the Bhonsle state was divided into two parts to accommodate the rival claims of two out of Raghujji's four sons. Janoji was declared the senasaheb subah in accordance with Raghujji's last wishes, Madhoji was given Chanda with the title of sena-dhurandhar. Balaji Baji Rao exacted a present of 20 lakhs and thus asserted his claim to overlordship.

This was the background of Janoji Bhonsle's continuous restlessness during Madhav Rao's regime. The young peshwa was no less anxious than his father to assert central control over all sardars. He wanted total elimination of the chhatrapati and actually invested the Poona government with monarchical authority which had to be exercised in some cases through force of arms. Janoji unwisely provoked conflict by resorting to open hostility on several occasions.

Before taking up arms against Janoji in 1765 the peshwa concluded an alliance with the nizam, promising to restore to him the territory given to Janoji after the battle of Rakshasbhuvan. Then he started

³³ Ranade, *Introduction to Shahu Chhatrapati and the Peshwas' Diaries*, 5-6.

³⁴ Bengal Select Committee Proceedings, 21 March 1769.

³⁵ SPD, XX, 118, 142.

³⁶ Rajwade, II, pp. 98-99. *Aithasik Patravayakar*, 35-39. *Chitnis Bakhar*, 79.

for Berar (October 1765) at the head of 15,000 troops. On his way he was joined by Raghunath Rao and Rukn-ud-daulah, the nizam's minister. The nizam himself followed; towards the close of January 1766 his troops came within a few miles of Nagpur. Dismayed by this formidable threat to his power, Janoji sued for peace. It was agreed that out of the territory given to him after the battle of Rakshasbhuvan Janoji would be allowed to retain a portion worth 8 lakhs, and the remaining portion would be divided between the peshwa and the nizam. This lenient treatment was probably due to the intercession of Raghunath Rao and Malhar Rao Holkar.³⁷

THIRD KARNATAK EXPEDITION

The conciliatory policy adopted by the peshwa towards the nizam was meant not only to facilitate his immediate object of securing Janoji Bhonsle's surrender because without a friendly understanding with Hyderabad it was difficult for the peshwa to resume his unfinished operations against Haidar Ali. After some efforts on the part of the Maratha vakil at Hyderabad to influence the nizam's court the peshwa personally met Nizam Ali and gave him territories worth 15 lakhs.³⁸ No definite agreement seems to have been concluded, although a general understanding about co-operation against Haidar resulted from the interview. The tentative plan seems to have been as follows: "Each to recover what territory has been taken from him by Haidar, and money and contributions were to be equally divided."³⁹

Haidar Ali was probably quite aware of these developments. In his search for active support he naturally turned towards the English. Although the Bombay authorities met him half way by proposing a treaty of peace and friendship in July 1766, no agreement on precise and clear terms was found possible. The English preferred an alliance with the nizam, whose understanding with the Marathas had considerably strengthened his position. Moreover, the Company was very anxious to secure possession of the northern sarkars. In spite of his former objections to surrender these districts, Nizam Ali now seemed inclined to accept the proposal of the English, probably because he was particularly anxious to crush Haidar. The result was General Calliaud's treaty with the nizam⁴⁰ (12 November 1766), by which the Company secured a sanad for the five sarkars and in return promised 'to have a body of their troops ready to

³⁷ SPD, XX, 159-61, 164-66, 169-72, 184.

³⁸ SPD, XXXVIII, 157-59, 166, 167, 189.

³⁹ Madras Military Consultations, Vol. 26A, p. 65.

⁴⁰ Aitchison, *Treaties*, V (1864), pp. 14-18.

settle the affairs of His Highness's Government', it being distinctly understood that the auxiliary force was to be employed against Haidar Ali. The Madras authorities wrote to the Court of Directors on 22 January 1767, "it was absolutely necessary to support the Nizam to secure an open communication between this place and Bengal, and to prevent the Marathas from overpowering him in which case they would immediately become very troublesome on this side the Kistnah and to Bengal". To their colleagues in Bombay they wrote on 18 November 1766, "we may be prevailed to assist (the nizam) in reducing the Mysore Government within its ancient and proper bounds and which we cannot but look upon as a favourable opportunity of checking the ambitious design of a man from whose violence, immense conquest, riches and power the peace of the Nabob's (Muhammad Ali's) dominions is liable to be disturbed."⁴¹

Meanwhile Haidar's commanders were ravaging the Maratha territory in Karnatak and a Maratha sardar named Babuji Naik Joshi of Baramati was in secret correspondence with him. The peshwa took prompt steps for the suppression of Babuji Naik⁴² and crossed the Krishna in January 1767. The alliance between the nizam and the English probably excited his suspicions; at any rate, his movements make it clear that he did not expect active co-operation from the nizam. He rapidly occupied Jetgi, Kittoor, Kanchhangarh, Godwal, Bellary, Shidnoor, Adoni and Devdurg. In these operations the nawab of Savanur did not loyally support the peshwa. Haidar fortified Bangalore, Sira and Bidnur, and shut himself up with his troops at Seringapatam. Unprepared to confront the Marathas in the open field, he remained content only with devastating his own territory, so that the Marathas could get neither food nor water. But they pushed forward and captured Sira Mir Reza, who commanded the fort, accepted service under the peshwa. The surrender of Sira was followed by the fall of Madgiri (March 1767), where the peshwa found the former raja and queen mother of Bidnur, imprisoned by Haidar since 1763. He took them under his protection. The Marathas captured many places in quick succession—Channarayadurga, Dod Balapur, Chik Balapur, Dewanhalli, Hoskote, Nandigarh, Kolar. Haidar repeatedly begged for peace; he became very anxious when he heard that the nizam was advancing to join the peshwa. Madhav Rao also found himself in a difficult position. He had no money to meet the expenses of the camp. The rains had already set in and the Marathas had no boats to cross the rivers. Moreover, he was

41 Madras Military Consultations, Vol. 24, p. 615.

42 SPD. XXXVII, 75-77, 79-85, 88-90, 92, 95, 97, 100, 118.

naturally reluctant to allow the nizam to enjoy the fruits of victories to which he had made no contribution.⁴³

So peace was concluded towards the close of April or early in May. The peshwa retained Channarayadurga, Madgiri, Dod Balapur and Hoskote. Sira, Kolar, Chik Balapur and Nandigarh were to be returned to Haidar. Haidar agreed to pay to the peshwa 31 lakhs and to the nizam 18 lakhs. The nizam, who was advancing towards Madgiri in April, was not satisfied with the provision made for him by the peshwa in the treaty with Haidar.⁴⁴ When Colonel Tod went to the peshwa to demand a share of the spoils for the nizam, his request was treated with 'broad ridicule'.⁴⁵ As early as November 1766 General Calliaud had anticipated 'seeds of contention and dispute' in the joint Maratha-nizam expedition against Haidar Ali.⁴⁶

FIRST ANGLO-MYSORE WAR: MOSTYN'S EMBASSY

The peshwa's return to Poona was followed a few months later by the outbreak of the First Anglo-Mysore War (August 1767), which made the Marathas the decisive factor in south Indian politics. The peshwa was courted by the English and Muhammad Ali on the one side and by Nizam Ali and Haidar on the other. The Madras authorities apprehended that the peshwa might 'come on the Carnatic for a demand of chauth or at least to be required to be well paid for his forbearance'. They suggested that Madhav Rao should be kept engaged in family disputes or internal revolts. If no such convenient diversion was feasible, an alliance with Poona was to be seriously contemplated. At this moment the English were more afraid of Haidar than of the Marathas. They were prepared to purchase the peshwa's support by allowing him to annex Bidur; Mysore was to be restored to the Hindu raja under British protection subject to the payment of chauth to the Marathas. But the proposals submitted by a Maratha vakil to the nawab of Arcot included 'the entire extirpation of Nizam Ali and the whole family of Nizam-ul-mulk from the subahship of the Deccan' and the establishment of one of Shah Alam's sons at Hyderabad. The Madras authorities were not prepared to weaken Hyderabad. They thought that "the government of the Deccan should (if possible) be kept entire—otherwise it must fall to the Marathas and increase their power and make

⁴³ Khare, III, 644, 648, 660, 664, 669-71, 674, 679, 680, 683, 689-91, 706. SPD, XXXVII, 122, 128, 130, 133-38, 140-42, 144, 146-50, 153, 155.

⁴⁴ Khare, III, 718, 721. SPD, XXXVII, 158, 159, 161.

⁴⁵ Wilks, II, 16.

⁴⁶ Bengal Select Committee Proceedings, 16 January 1767.

them dangerous neighbours to the Company's possessions both in Bengal and on this coast". The authorities in Bengal took an unfavourable view of the proposal for Maratha alliance. They advised their friends in Madras that "you will find it a more difficult task to rid yourselves of such importunate and aspiring friends (as the Marathas) than of your present troublesome enemy".⁴⁷

The confederate army of Haidar Ali and the nizam was defeated at Changama and Trinomali in September 1767. Then the English seriously took up the proposal of dethroning Nizam Ali, but for reasons different from those suggested by the Marathas. Nizam Ali was not likely to 'submit to such a dependence on the Company which must be insisted on whoever is placed in the Subahship as a means of maintaining in the Deccan an effectual barrier against the Marathas'. So thought the Madras authorities. The Calcutta authorities wanted to make the nizam steady against the seductions of the French. A blank farman was secured from the helpless emperor Shah Alam by the governor of Bengal; but it was difficult to find a reliable substitute for Nizam Ali. Moreover, the problem of supplying the military assistance which the puppet nizam was sure to require for the consolidation of his position perplexed the advocates of this plan. Meanwhile Nizam Ali concluded peace with the Company (March 1768). The Madras authorities then kept the blank farman 'with all possible privacy'.⁴⁸

Towards the close of the year 1767 the Bombay authorities sent to Poona an envoy named Thomas Mostyn⁴⁹ for the purpose of ascertaining the peshwa's views and of trying to prevent the Marathas from joining Haidar Ali. The instructions with which the envoy started reminded him that "the growing power of the Marathas is a subject much to be lamented", and he was clearly told that the Company was very reluctant to 'contribute in any shape to increase their growing power'. The coalition between Haidar Ali and the nizam compelled the English 'to cultivate an alliance' with the Marathas, 'at least for the present', for without the military assistance of the peshwa the Company could not attack Haidar's possessions on the west coast. On the other hand, if the peshwa joined Haidar Ali and the nizam, they would be able to 'threaten very dangerous consequences' to British interests on the eastern coast. Thus an alliance with Poona was necessary for offence and defence alike, but

47 Madras Military Consultations, Vol. 36, p. 113. Bengal Select Committee Proceedings, 21 September 1767; 3 October 1767.

48 Bengal Select Committee Proceedings, 27 October 1767; 20 December 1767; 10 February 1768; 27 April 1768.

49 See Forrest, *Selections from Bombay Records*, Maratha Series, I, 141-73.

Mostyn was not to show much anxiety for it if he found that the peshwa was not prepared to undertake 'any distant expedition' or to send cavalry⁵⁰ to Madras. Full advantage was to be taken of the quarrel between the peshwa and his uncle, and the latter was to be encouraged if he made 'any advances'. If the peshwa was found willing to seriously entertain the proposal of military alliance, he was to be offered Bidnur and Sunda, provided he agreed to assign to the Company Bassein and Salsette⁵¹ with its dependencies, the Maratha share of the revenues of Surat, as well as commercial concessions in Malabar.

Similar instructions were given by the Madras authorities to Nagoji Rao, their envoy to the peshwa, who arrived at Poona in January 1768. The peshwa was to be told that 'the English were prepared to co-operate with the Marathas to "root out the disturber" of Mysore on three chief conditions. First, the Hindu raja should be restored to the throne and the chauth would regularly be paid to the Marathas. Secondly, the Marathas should give up all claim of chauth on "the countries of Dindagul and other places formerly belonging to the Karnatak". Thirdly, the English should be reimbursed their expenses, and Salsette and Bassein should be granted to the Company. If the peshwa's attitude proved unfavourable, he might be given to understand that the raja of Berar was soliciting the friendship of the English in Bengal. Finally, Nagoji Rao was asked to remember that "it is not so much the Peshwa's assistance the English want as that he should not assist" Haidar Ali or the nizam.

Mostyn arrived at Poona on 29 November 1767, and left for Bombay on 27 February 1768. At first he found that the Maratha court 'is undetermined what part they shall act, and are laying by to see what turn affairs in the Karnatak will take before they come to any resolution'. He was then instructed to prevail on the peshwa at least to remain neutral, if he could not persuade him to assist the Company. Mostyn's experience at Poona convinced him that it was unnecessary for him to betray too much anxiety for the peshwa's neutrality; there were many factors to prevent the peshwa from joining Haidar Ali and the nizam at that moment. Haidar was the most persistent and powerful enemy of the Marathas; it was clear that they would not, in point of policy, support him. Secondly, the Jats and the Rajputs were creating troubles in north India; the Marathas had to remain

⁵⁰ The want of cavalry on the English side was one of the chief factors leading to these negotiations.

⁵¹ "The possession of Salsette is the first and grand object we have in view." See Forrest, *Selections from Bombay Records*, Home Series, II, 132, 134.

on their guard and could not send a large part of their forces to participate in the Anglo-Mysore War. Thirdly, "Raghoba is also as ever a check upon them". Finally, the state of the peshwa's finances was very unsatisfactory. Mostyn established contact with Raghunath Rao, who openly expressed his desire 'to engage the English on his side and receive help from them when he might take up arms, which after the rains he was fully resolved on'.

The position of the Company appreciably improved when the nizam deserted Haidar Ali and concluded a separate peace with the nawab of Arcot.⁵² Mostyn wrote in February 1768: "Since the Nizam had left Hydar Ali there was little to be apprehended from the latter alone; therefore the forming a junction with the Marathas appeared the less necessary, more specially as the jealousies and disputes between Madhav Rao and his uncle Raghoba would prevent their joining Hydar Ali or giving us any material assistance, at least before the rains". The peshwa betrayed his own weakness when, in an interview with Mostyn, he told the envoy that he 'expected and hoped the Hon'ble Company would not support or assist any of his enemies even though they were his relations'. Mostyn assured him that "so long as he remained firm in his friendship with them (i.e. the English) they would not think of supporting or assisting either his relations or any one else against him". In his letter to Bombay, dated 14 February 1768, Mostyn observed that it had then become unnecessary to form a junction with the Marathas.

Mostyn's vivid and interesting diary reveals how commanding, and at the same time how weak, the position of Madhav Rao really was. His friendship was courted on all sides, and his intervention in the Anglo-Mysore War would probably have proved decisive. But domestic difficulties stood in his way, and the contest between Haidar Ali and the English was decided without his intervention. The peshwa could not take advantage of the troubles of his enemies and rivals because the unpatriotic revolts of Raghunath Rao and Janoji Bhonsle crippled his policy and diverted his mind from territorial expansion of internal consolidation.

A brief reference may be made to the question of Bidnur which occupied a prominent place in Mostyn's negotiations with the peshwa. After release from imprisonment in the fort of Madgiri the queen-mother of Bidnur died on the way to Poona and the 'young raja' came with the peshwa to the Maratha capital. The Bombay authorities were prepared to co-operate with the Marathas in conquering

⁵² The treaty is dated 23 February 1768. See Aitchison, V(1864), pp. 21-30.

Bidnur from Haidar Ali and to allow the peshwa to annex Bidnur and Sunda. But the 'young raja' expected to be restored to his ancestral state with English assistance. Mostyn favoured his claim and observed, "... no objection occurs to me at present why he should not be openly demanded of the Marathas, nor do I think they can be disgusted at it, provided they are guaranteed for payment of their chauth without trouble". But the peshwa claimed 'the whole of the countries of Bidnur and Sunda'. After Mostyn's departure from Poona a Maratha envoy went to Bombay and demanded Mysore, Bidnur and Sunda, saying that any place the English might occupy in those countries should be given away to the peshwa. This demand was 'peremptorily refused'.

END OF FIRST ANGLO-MYSORE WAR

About the middle of the year 1768 the nizam was reported to be repentant for making peace with the nawab of Arcot. He suspected that his minister Rukn-ud-daulah had been bribed by the English to advocate peace. Plans were made for murdering the minister and also for reversing the policy he stood for. It was believed that the Maratha agent at the nizam's capital was one of the principal instigators of this dispute between Nizam Ali and Rukn-ud-daulah. The Madras authorities suggested to Calcutta that, if the peshwa joined the nizam and Haidar Ali, Janoji Bhonsle might be instigated to invade the peshwa's territory; but the reply from Calcutta was discouraging. Meanwhile it was reported that Rukn-ud-daulah had gone to Poona and that Haidar Ali had sent attractive proposals to the peshwa. The despatches of Brome, the envoy of the Bombay authorities at the court of Poona, gave enough cause to apprehend that the peshwa was ready to join Haidar Ali. Haidar had promised to pay the peshwa a sum of 30 lakhs of rupees for military assistance, in addition to current expenses of the army sent to fight against the English. In order to nullify the effect of this offer Brome was authorized to offer Bidnur.⁵³

While Brome's reports were creating alarm at Bombay Rukn-ud-daulah succeeded in concluding an agreement with the peshwa. The forts of Ansem and Badaney and a jagir worth 12 lakhs were to be given to the nizam. A joint expedition was to be sent against the nawab of Arcot. Of the territories conquered from him, one-fourth would be taken by the peshwa and the rest would go to the nizam.

⁵³ Bengal Select Committee Proceedings, 20 July 1768; 10 August 1768; 6 October 1768; 13 December 1768.

The position of the Madras authorities now became desperate. They wrote to Calcutta on 28 January 1769, "There being no room to doubt of Madhav Rao's intentions of hostilities, and considering the state of our treasury and resources, it appears evident almost to demonstration that in a very little time, far from being able to maintain an army in the field, we should not even have the means of paying our forces in garrison." Urgent appeals were made to Bengal for money, and it was apprehended that, if the Marathas invaded the territories of the nawab of Arcot, no revenues could be drawn from Karnatak. Some relief was, however, derived from the expectation that Haidar Ali's apprehension of Maratha designs would keep his anti-British feelings in check. The old theory of utilising him as a 'barrier' against Maratha expansion was revived: "Haidar is the best barrier to the Carnatic against the Marathas with whom he ever has been and must be at variance and probably never will pay the chauth, but when they can demand it at the head of a superior force."⁵⁴

All speculations came to an abrupt end when Haidar Ali dictated the terms of peace (2 April 1769). The second article of the proposed treaty provided that "in case either of the contracting parties shall be attacked, they shall from their respective countries mutually assist each other to drive the enemy out". As Haidar wanted to be quite sure of English assistance against the Marathas, he tried to make the alliance both offensive and defensive. The Madras authorities observed, "The offensive part we absolutely rejected and tried to decline the defensive as far as could be done without absolutely breaking off the treaty, as we were fully sensible of the difficulties in which we might be thereby involved. But no peace could be expected without it, and it was with the utmost difficulty that Haidar would consent to the article even in its present form."⁵⁵

The net result of the war, so far as the Marathas were concerned, was that the peshwa could neither get money by helping Haidar, nor acquire territory by helping his enemies. The rich districts of Bidnur and Sunda remained beyond his grasp. Haidar's defensive treaty with the English, though aimed against the Marathas, proved in the long run to be a barren victory.

SECOND CIVIL WAR

Once again we must turn to the story of domestic discord within the Maratha empire. While the peshwa was engaged in the third

⁵⁴ Bengal Select Committee Proceedings, 25 January 1769; 1 March 1769.

⁵⁵ Madras Military Consultations, Vol. 33, p. 231.

Karnatak expedition Raghunath Rao was conducting an inconclusive campaign in north India. Both of them returned home about the middle of the year 1767. Raghunath stationed himself at Anandvalli near Nasik and began to collect troops for an open contest with his nephew. He had never been able to reconcile himself to the enforced loss of authority. Soon after the conclusion of the second Karnatak expedition he had demanded that the Maratha empire should be divided into two parts, one of which should be given to him. The peshwa refused to accept this demand. The quarrel affected the administration, and the local officers hesitated to pay to either of the claimants the amounts due from them. After his return from north India Raghunath complained that the peshwa did not send him adequate assistance. He overlooked the fact that the peshwa was fighting simultaneously in Karnatak and was not in a position to help him with men and money. Raghunath also brooded over his disappointment in the case of succession to the Holkar state⁵⁶ which he attributed, not without reason, to the peshwa's interference. Unable to conceal his sentiments and tormented by his ambitious and unscrupulous wife, he half willingly prepared for a renewal of civil war.⁵⁷

As the peshwa was very eager for conciliation he met his uncle in September 1767, and an agreement was concluded through the mediation of Sakharam Bapu. Madhav Rao agreed to pay his uncle's debts and to place at his disposal a large jagir including several important forts. Raghunath remained dissatisfied, but his military inferiority compelled him to keep silent for some time. He opened secret negotiations with Haidar Ali, Nizam Ali, Janoji Bhonsle and Damaji Gaikwad.⁵⁸ He also came in contact with Brome, Mostyn's assistant, who visited him at Nasik in December 1767-January 1768. Raghunath's vakil told Brome that "Raghoba would not sit quietly under the disgrace of having all the principal forts taken out of his hands and no share in the government". Brome was also told that the disappointed uncle 'had concerted measures for entering into a strict and lasting friendship with the English'. Raghunath himself 'earnestly entreated' the English officer to 'assist him with guns and ammunition'.⁵⁹ Raghunath's expectation of English support was apparently not unknown to the peshwa who, as we have seen,

⁵⁶ See below.

⁵⁷ Khare, III, 573, 574; p. 1246. SPD, XIX, 52.

⁵⁸ Khare, III, 729, 748; pp. 1248, 1250, 1260. SPD, XIX, 56, 61, 65, 67, 68, 71, 74.

⁵⁹ Forrest, *Selections from Bombay Records, Maratha Series, I*, 153, 160, 166-68.

wanted from Mostyn an assurance that the Company 'would not support or assist any of his enemies even though they were his relations'. The Bombay authorities, however, were not unprepared to assist the ambitious uncle.⁶⁰

During the winter season of 1767-68 Raghunath succeeded in dislocating the peshwa's plans in all directions. He could not take advantage of the First Anglo-Mysore War to increase his influence in Karnatak. He had to give up his project of attacking the Sidis of Janjira. He had to conciliate the nizam. He carefully watched the movements of his uncle and found him completing his preparations. So he collected troops, and open hostilities began.⁶¹

Apprehending that Janoiji Bhonsle would soon come to assist Raghunath who had already marched to Dhodap, a fort in the Chandor Range, Madhav Rao advanced with his troops in that direction. When the uncle found that his camp was threatened by the peshwa's troops, he tried to avoid hostilities and desired to take shelter in Berar. But the peshwa was determined to fight. A decisive battle took place at Dhodap on 10 June 1768, resulting in the peshwa's victory. The fort of Dhodap, in which Raghunath had taken shelter on the eve of the battle, was then besieged and compelled to surrender. Raghunath was taken to Poona and confined there. He tried in vain to escape from confinement in March 1769, but the vigilance of Nana Fadnis frustrated his plan. On several occasions he undertook fasts. He also intrigued with the nizam and Haidar Ali. In March 1772 he was released from confinement, although strict watch was kept over him and he was not allowed to interfere in political affairs.⁶² Even after this he organized a plot 'to raise ten thousand horse, with an intent... to surprise Poona, seize his nephew, and take the government in his hands'.⁶³ On his deathbed Madhav Rao reconciled himself with his uncle and secured from him a promise that he would act rightly towards Narayan Rao. Raghunath's failure to keep this promise was the first step towards the fall of the Maratha empire.

CAMPAIGN AGAINST BHONSLE : TREATY OF KANAKAPUR

After the battle of Dhodap the peshwā turned his attention to Janoiji Bhonsle. He collected troops and entered into an agreement

⁶⁰ Forrest, *Selections from Bombay Records*, Home Series, v. 1, 153.

⁶¹ Khare, III, pp. 1261-62, 1264. SPD, XIX, 76, 79-82.

⁶² SPD, XIX, 83-85, 87, 91, 93; XX, 198, 287. Khare, III, 773.

⁶³ Gense and Banaji, *The Third English Embassy to Poona*, 19-20.

with the nizam, who sent an army under Rukn-ud-daulah to proceed against Berar. Finding that hostilities were inevitable, Janoji decided to embarrass his enemies by adopting the old Maratha system of guerilla warfare, in which the peshwa was less experienced than in the half regular kind of warfare to which his attention had been directed.

While the combined troops of the peshwa and the nizam plundered Nagpur and devastated the Bhonsle territory, Janoji advanced towards Poona with the intention of releasing Raghunath from confinement and restoring him to power. The peshwa sent Gopal Rao Patwardhan and Ramchandra Ganesh to pursue him, but they had some secret understanding with Janoji. This disloyalty was not a secret to the peshwa, who was also afraid that the English might help Janoji. So he personally advanced towards his running enemy. Early in March 1769 Janoji found it impossible to elude his pursuers. So he gave up his plan of plundering Poona and proceeded towards Nirmala. Both sides now felt the strain of war. Janoji's army was suffering from want of food and fodder. His territory had been ravaged so mercilessly that it could not be restored to normal conditions in less than five years. He heard with alarm that the peshwa had entered into 'some intrigues' with his brother Mudhoji. On the other side the peshwa was afraid of a rising at Poona in favour of his uncle and also of English intervention in favour of Bhonsle. The nizam's troops were unwilling to continue the fight.⁶⁴

In April 1769 there was an interview between the peshwa and Janoji Bhonsle at Kanakapur and peace was concluded. Janoji returned to the peshwa the entire territory (worth 8 lakhs) ceded to him in 1765 and also promised to pay a tribute of 5 lakhs. He was required neither to increase nor to diminish his military force without the peshwa's permission. He was to attend whenever his services were requisitioned by the peshwa. He was not to carry on political correspondence with the emperor of Delhi, the Ruhelas, the nawab of Avadh, the English and the nizam, although he could maintain agents with the English in Orissa and also in the court of Hyderabad for the regulation of revenue affairs. The peshwa, on his part, promised not to ravage Janoji's territory and to pay no attention to the pretensions of his relatives. The nizam was given lands worth 3

64 SPD, XX, 208, 211, 213, 216, 219, 226, 227, 228, 239, 241, 246, 247. Khare, III, 784, 791, 796, 797, 798; pp. 1328-31, 1334. Janoji intrigued with the nizam for the restoration of Raghunath. His appeal for help was rejected by Verelst, governor of Bengal. (Bengal Select Committee Proceedings, 1 March 1769. CPC, II, 1388, 1393, 1633, 1708; III, 45).

lakhs and an estate worth a lakh was given to Rukn-ud-daulah. Janoji remained loyal to the peshwa till his death (in May 1772). He refused Haidar Ali's overtures in October 1769 saying that the peshwa's enemy was his enemy.⁶⁵

FOURTH KARNATAK EXPEDITION

After conclusion of hostilities with Janoji Bhonsle the peshwa made preparations for leading another expedition against Haidar Ali, who had evaded payment of arrears of tribute and levied contributions upon some of the Poligars tributary to the Marathas. Mir Reza, who had accepted the peshwa's service in 1767, had rejoined Haidar and occupied Bagepalli and Talpula. Murar Rao of Gutti and the nawab of Savanur conciliated Haidar by payment of tribute. While realising tribute by force from Chitaldurg, Harpanhalli and other places the Mysore ruler tried to maintain peace by offering terms which, however, proved unacceptable to the peshwa. He also sought to instigate Raghunath Rao and Janoji Bhonsle to revolt against the peshwa. But on this occasion he was disappointed; Raghunath was a closely guarded prisoner, and Janoji refused to fall in the trap.⁶⁶

The peshwa completed his preparations and left Poona in October 1769. He proceeded directly towards Seringapatam. A detachment of 10,000 troops was placed under Gopal Rao Patwardhan and Anand Rao Raste to watch Haidar's movements. It appears that the large Maratha army was made up of about 75,000 troops and 50 guns. This expedition was in some respects different from the peshwa's earlier Karnatak expeditions. A contemporary Marathi letter informs us that his object was to humble Haidar completely.⁶⁷ The English authorities had the same impression, for they wrote on 10 March 1771, 'From the present conduct of the Marathas both in the North and the South, and from the genius, spirit and ambition of Madhav Rao, we are inclined to suspect that their designs are not confined to mere collection of chauth but extend to the subjection of the whole Peninsula.'⁶⁸ The proceedings of the peshwa, says Wilks, "seemed to abandon the ordinary routine of Maratha plunder, and to point to the fixed conquest of the whole country. Among other arrangements he was accompanied by garrisons regularly organized and independent of his field force, for the occupation of the principal

⁶⁵ Grant Duff (ed. Edwardes), I, pp. 561-62. SPD, XX, 277-80, 283, 287, 292, 300, 301. Khare, III, 801, p. 1335-36. *Amharak Patrik*, 117-19.

⁶⁶ SPD, XXXVII, 172. Khare, III, 814, 815, 818, 827; pp. 1377-80.

⁶⁷ SPD, XXXVII, 174, 175, 182, 184, 185, 187, 194. Khare, III, p. 1383.

⁶⁸ Bengal Select Committee Proceedings, 10 March 1771.

forts.⁶⁹ Indeed, all important forts in the occupied territory were garrisoned by the Marathas, but the unimportant forts were dismantled in order to prevent Haidar from utilising them.⁷⁰

Haidar was obviously impressed by the peshwa's preparations. He could find no ally among the Marathas, nor could he count upon the nizam⁷¹ or the English. Wilks says that he did homage to the military talents of the peshwa by refusing to confront him in the open field and followed his old plan of devastating his own territory.⁷² He himself took shelter in the forest of Udagani with his troops and guns; the remaining troops were distributed among the generals and scattered in different forts. Tipu was sent to Seringapatam to devastate the area in anticipation of the Maratha attack.⁷³ The scorched earth tactics were not unknown in those days.

Within the months of January and February 1770 the peshwa occupied many important posts—Budihal, Kandikere, Handikere, Chiknavakanhalli, Bhairabdurga, Nagmangal, Balapur, Nandigram and others. Apparently undisturbed by these losses, Haidar left Udagani towards the close of January, went to Turuvekere, and then marched towards Seringapatam under cover of darkness. His real intention was to deliver a night attack on the Marathas. On his way, however, he was attacked by a Maratha detachment under Gopal Rao Patwardhan, Murar Rao and Anand Rao Raste, but his artillery saved him.⁷⁴

On reaching Seringapatam Haidar was joined by Mir Raza and Tipu, who had so long been creating diversions to keep the Marathas engaged in desultory operations. He strengthened the fort,⁷⁵ collected provisions, and waited there for the coming of the rainy season. This policy apparently served him well. The Madras authorities wrote to Calcutta on 24 March 1770, "Madhav Rao is still in the Mysore country but has not hitherto been able to gain any material

⁶⁹ *History of Mysore*, II, 135.

⁷⁰ Peixoto, VI, 45.

⁷¹ In February 1769 the nizam proposed to join the peshwa against Haidar Ali for realising the amount which the latter had agreed to pay in 1767. (SPD, XXXVII, 168).

⁷² *History of Mysore*, II, 132.

⁷³ Peixoto, V, 167.

⁷⁴ SPD, XXXVII, 190, 192-99. Khare, III, pp. 1384, 1385, 1388-97. Peixoto, V, 174, 175, 183, 185-96; VI, 5, 6, 38-41.

⁷⁵ "No other fort in Haidar's dominions has a neighbourhood so fit as this for the encampment of a powerful army that requires many necessities for its subsistence, particularly the three essential ones—provisions, water, forage. Provisions for 12 years are laid up here. There is no lack of water, for the Kaveri runs close by the walls and the fort is in an island." (Peixoto, VI, 46).

advantage over Haidar who has maintained his ground and seems likely to do so until the season will oblige Madhav Rao to repass the Kistna or to determine to continue on this side the whole year.⁷⁶

In April 1770 the peshwa captured the strong forts of Devarayadurga and Nijgal. Then he started for Poona, for his health was gradually giving way. Trimbak Rao was left in Karnatak to continue the operations. The peshwa might have concluded the expedition by taking tribute from Haidar, but he was determined to crush his enemy.⁷⁷ For two years Trimbak Rao, ably assisted by Gopal Rao till his death, carried on operations against Haidar Ali with conspicuous bravery and success.

The relative positions of the two parties in 1770 are thus described by Peixoto, an officer in Haidar Ali's army : 'The Marathas have not only the greatest force on their side, but the prayers of all the people, who everywhere without exception are robbed and harassed (by Haidar) and under a weight of contribution that it is not possible for them to bear. The Nabob (i.e. Haidar) has a large force, but not to be compared with that of the Marathas. The Nabob's advantage is that all his troops are better disciplined. But if he resolves to give battle in the plains or to retire into any stronghold, he is ruined.'⁷⁸

After the departure of the peshwa, the Marathas captured Chik Balapur, Gurumkonda and some important places in the Kolar district. Meanwhile the peshwa established a new gun factory at Poona and employed new European gunners and gardis. Towards the close of the year 1770 he again proceeded to Karnatak, but ill-health compelled him to return to Poona, where he reached on 20 January 1771. He left 10,000 troops and 10 guns to reinforce Trimbak Rao. Haidar was still at Seringapatam, surrounded by the Marathas on two sides. He desperately sued for peace, but his terms were rejected by the Marathas. His position was somewhat improved by the death of Gopal Rao Patwardhan on 7 February 1771. Murar Rao, who had deserted Haidar at the beginning of this expedition, was ill, and Trimbak Rao was very unpopular owing to his irritable temper.⁷⁹ Thus the Maratha camp became considerably weakened in leadership, though not in fighting strength.

Towards the close of February or early in March 1771 Trimbak Rao appeared near Seringapatam, having captured several forts on

⁷⁶ Bengal Select Committee Proceedings, 15 April 1770.

⁷⁷ SPD, XXXVII, 203, 204, 206, 207, 209. Khare, III, pp. 1402-4.

⁷⁸ Peixoto, VI, 101.

⁷⁹ SPD, XXXVII, 219, 223, 224. Bengal Select Committee Proceedings, 10 March 1771; 17 May 1771.

the way. Haidar now left the protection of the fort, probably in order to prevent the Maratha invasion of Bidnur, for, with a Mysore army in the rear Trimbak Rao could not advance to the west. Haidar met the Maratha army at Moqi Talab, about 10 miles north-west of Seringapatam city, on 5 March 1771. The Marathas secured a decisive victory.⁸⁰ Trimbak Rao claimed that 75 guns, about 8,000 horses, 20 or 25 elephants, treasure and jewellery were captured. Some of Haidar's principal officers, including Mir Reza, became prisoners, and he himself fled to Seringapatam in the guise of a monk or beggar. But the Marathas failed to gain any permanent advantage from this victory. They allowed the remnant of Haidar's army to reach Seringapatam and gave him ten days' respite to complete his arrangements for the defence of the capital 'which had been left absolutely without the means of resistance'. When Haidar had partly recovered from the shock and losses of the defeat, Trimbak Rao came to Seringapatam and tried in vain to capture the fort by a half-hearted siege. Haidar was prepared to pay 50 lakhs for peace, but Anand Rao Raste demanded one crore and the cession of Bidnur, Sunda and all districts 'taken from us and the Poligars'. Haidar rejected these extravagant demands and awaited confidently the result of the siege. Towards the end of April Trimbak Rao, weakened by scarcity of provisions and urged by the peshwa to proceed towards Bidnur, gave up the siege. In July the Madras authorities reported to England that the Marathas were employed in reducing many forts leading from Seringapatam towards Bidnur.⁸¹

During the rainy season of 1771 Haidar Ali recruited troops, cut off the supplies of the Maratha army and attacked several Maratha posts. His fleet, under the command of Raghuji,⁸² the rebel son of Tukaji Angria, advanced towards Vijaydurg, but the precautionary measures taken by the peshwa frustrated this attempt. Negotiations for peace were going on, but Haidar did not treat the Maratha demands seriously, for he knew that the peshwa was seriously ill.⁸³

About this time the Maratha raja of Tanjore appealed to Trimbak Rao for assistance against the nawab of Arcot. Trimbak Rao left Vaman Rao Patwardhan in Mysore and advanced towards Tanjore. Before his arrival there Muhammad Ali and the Madras government compelled the Maratha raja to make peace. Trimbak Rao realised

⁸⁰ SPD, XXXVII, 226. Oreg. Ms., No. 8, pp. 51-54. Wilks, 146-47.

⁸¹ SPD, XXXVII, 227. Khare, IV, 112. Bengal Select Committee Proceedings, 4 June 1771.

⁸² See S. N. Sen, *Early Career of Kanhoji Angria and other Papers*, 54-56.

⁸³ SPD, XXXVII, 228-31. Khare, IV, 1151.

4 lakhs from the raja and an unspecified amount from the nawab.⁸⁴ He then realised tribute from the Baranahal region and plundered Coimbatore (September 1771–February 1772). Returning to Mysore he devastated Haidar's territories and made preparations for an attack on Bidnur. Towards the close of 1771 a detachment of 20,000 horse had come from Poona under the command of Narayan Rao, the peshwa's younger brother.⁸⁵

Although France now no longer played an active role in the political turmoils of south India, both the Marathas and Haidar Ali sent envoys to Pondicherry with proposals for a body of troops to be furnished by the French governor who, however, refused to participate in their quarrel. The Madras authorities wrote to the court of directors on 28 February 1772. By their numerous and superior cavalry they (i.e. the Marathas) can ravage and lay waste the countries they invade with little opposition but they find it difficult to reduce forts of strength for which reason they are very desirous of obtaining the assistance of the Europeans. We have lately received intelligence that Madhav Rao has it in his intention to send an agent to the Court of France the agent's name is Abdul Gaffur, an inhabitant of Constantinople who was lately at Poona.⁸⁶ Whether Madhav Rao ever sent any agent to France we do not know.

In April 1772 the peshwa sent peremptory orders to Trimbak Rao to conclude peace. The Poona treasury was empty, and no more money could be spared for war in Karnatak. Haidar Ali was 'wearied with a hopeless warfare and mourning over the destruction of his resources'. Peace was concluded on the following terms. Haidar Ali paid 31 lakhs and agreed to pay 19 lakhs more in three years. The Marathas retained Sira, Madgiri, Gurumkonda, Dod Balapur, Kolar and Hoskote with their dependencies, but Nandigarh, Chik Balapur and Devaravadurga had to be surrendered. The Maratha army began its homeward march in June.⁸⁷

The last and longest of Madhav Rao's Karnatak expeditions was not altogether unsuccessful although his original objective of destroying Haidar's power remained unfulfilled. As Wilks points out, Haidar's northern boundary was reduced within narrower limits than those which had been controlled by the Hindu rulers of Mysore at the beginning of the eighteenth century.⁸⁸ Still greater successes might

⁸⁴ Bengal Select Committee Proceedings, 15 April 1772.

⁸⁵ Ibid. 10 January 1772.

⁸⁶ Military Department Despatch to England, 28 February 1772.

⁸⁷ SPD, XXXVII, 233, 234, Khare, IV, 1171.

⁸⁸ History of Mysore, II, 152.

have been secured had Trimbak Rao been able to make proper use of his victory at Moti Talab. The peshwa's fatal illness, the chronic financial difficulties of the Marathas, and dissensions within the Maratha camp⁸⁹ furthered Haidar's cause no less than his ingenuity and his disciplined troops.

THE ENGLISH AND MARATHA-MYSORE WAR

The East India Company had played an indecisive role in the recent war. At the beginning of the hostilities both the Marathas and Haidar Ali appealed for assistance to the Madras authorities, the latter basing his claim on the second article of the treaty of 1769. But the Madras authorities decided to remain neutral. They wrote to Calcutta on 13 February 1770: "Were we to assist Haidar, we could not hope to reduce the power of the Marathas, and we should thereby inevitably expose the Carnatic to their ravages, and on the other hand, were we to afford them assistance, they might probably be enabled to reduce Haidar entirely, which could only tend to aggrandize their power and render them more dangerous than they are at present, or in case Haidar should accommodate matters with them . . . he would not fail taking the first opportunity of avenging himself upon the Carnatic and the Company. We must therefore temporize with both in the best manner."⁹⁰

In spite of these shrewd calculations the Madras authorities found it difficult to explain away the second article of their treaty with Haidar Ali. They argued that the treaty was an 'act of necessity', presumably, therefore, it lost its validity as soon as the necessity was over. They also told Haidar that they considered him to be the aggressor. They were, however, conscious that they could not 'without a certain manifest violation of the treaty, take part with the Marathas against him'⁹¹ So they adopted and tenaciously pursued a policy of 'keeping alive the hopes and fears of both parties by not determining in favour of either without assuring assistance to the one or the other'.

The Marathas negotiated with the Madras authorities through the nawab of Arcot, who supported their claim for help against Haidar Ali. The nawab had a strong personal antipathy to Haidar. Moreover, he expected from the Marathas some territorial concessions as well as exemption from the demand for chauth. He also wanted, as

⁸⁹ Khare, IV, 1166.

⁹⁰ Bengal Select Committee Proceedings, 1770.

⁹¹ Madras Military Consultations, Vol. 36, pp. 49, 113.

Mill says, 'to place the English Government by means of alliance with the Marathas in a state of dependence upon himself'. Sir John Lindsay, the British king's representative in India, encouraged the nawab to adopt a pro-Maratha attitude and tried his best to discredit the Company's servants. Although Lindsay and the nawab pressed the Madras authorities to conclude an offensive alliance with the Marathas, they refused to do so. Ultimately they were supported by the London authorities.⁹²

When Haidar's position became critical, he requested assistance from the English, but the opposition of the nawab of Arcot prevented them 'from giving him any other assistance than that of withholding aid from the Marathas'. The nawab, encouraged probably by Lindsay, declined to bear any part of the charges of field operations against the Marathas even if they entered Karnatak. In June 1771 the Madras authorities wrote to Calcutta, "Haidar continues to press us for assistance which we have it not in our power to grant, as it is impossible for us to attempt anything without the revenues and resources of the Carnatic, which are entirely under the control of the Nabob, who on the other hand earnestly presses us to a junction with the Marathas to subdue Mysore. In this system, he is warmly seconded by Sir John Lindsay."⁹³

Towards the close of 1771 the Madras authorities suspected that the Marathas intended to invade Karnatak, for Trimbak Rao was proceeding towards Tanjore. They decided to hold themselves in readiness but to take no hostile step unless the Carnatic should be attacked. In December 1771 the Calcutta authorities were requested to create difficulties for the Marathas in north India. The reply was discouraging; it was very risky to provoke the Marathas in Hindustan. If British troops were sent to disturb Maratha possessions in north India, the Marathas might devastate Avadh and even enter into the interior of the Company's territories. The ruling chiefs of Hindustan were 'dibided, irresolute and incapable of taking any effectual measure to avert the impending danger'. Early in 1772 the nawab of Arcot sent an envoy to the Marathas and induced them to spare his territories.⁹⁴ The Maratha army retreated to Balaghat. Mill is probably right in holding that the Marathas were afraid of provoking the English to join Haidar Ali.⁹⁵ The conclusion of peace between

⁹² Madras Military Consultations, Vol. 36, p. 49. Madras Despatch to court of directors, 20 July 1771. Despatch to Madras from court of directors, 10 April 1771.

⁹³ Bengal Select Committee Proceedings, 7 February 1771; June 1771.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 10 January 1772; 3 February 1772; 15 March 1772.

⁹⁵ Mill, *History of British India*, III, 42.

Haidar Ali and the Marathas in May-June 1772 removed the causes of English apprehension and intervention. There is no doubt that Haidar's alienation from the English and his alliance with the Marathas, culminating in the second Anglo-Mysore War, were due in a large measure to the shifting diplomacy of the Madras authorities during the years 1769-72.

MOSTYN'S SECOND EMBASSY

We have already referred to Mostyn's first embassy to Poona in 1767-68. He went to England in 1768 and returned to India in 1772. The court of directors instructed the Bombay government to send him to Poona again to negotiate 'for certain advantages for the settlement in Malabar and also for the cession of the island and peninsula of Salsette and Bassein, which added so much to the security and value of Bombay'. He arrived at the Maratha capital in September 1772 when the peshwa was in his death-bed. His stay in Poona was long; he was there till February 1774. Mostyn's second embassy is particularly important because it was intended by the Bombay government to serve 'as an introduction to our having a fixed Resident at Poona'. But this expectation was not fulfilled: the first British resident at the peshwa's court was Sir Charles Malet appointed in 1787.

Mostyn came with instructions⁹⁶ from the Bombay government to penetrate into any design of the Marathas which might affect the English possessions in Bengal and Karnatak, to secure the cession of Salsette, Bassein and Karanja to offer in exchange—if necessary—the cession of Fort Victoria and a promise not to oppose the annexation of Danda-Rajpuri by the Marathas to secure possession of the Maratha share of the Surat revenue and, in general, to promote friendly relations between the Company and the Marathas. At Poona Madhav Rao was too ill to see him. He was received by Narayan Rao but there were no fruitful talks during the last days of the peshwa's life.

REVIVAL OF MARATHA POWER IN NORTH INDIA

In this brief survey of the main political events of the crowded post-Panipat decade no mention has been made of the recovery of Maratha power in north India which will be described in the next chapter. The peshwa himself never crossed the Narmada; like his father, he appears to have taken greater personal interest in the

96 Gense and Banaji, *The Third English Embassy to Poona*, 2-4.

affairs of the south than in those of the north. The south was the cradle of Maratha arms as also of Maratha political power beyond the homeland. The Maratha horsemen had reached the Coleroon long before they crossed the Narmada. The historic ties with the south had deeper roots in Maratha political consciousness than the expansionist dreams relating to the north. Madhav Rao was, however, keenly aware of his imperial responsibilities in the north. The heavy task of reasserting the shattered Maratha authority in Malwa, Bundelkhand, Rajputana, the Gangetic Doab and Delhi was entrusted to able chieftains like Malhar Rao Holkar, Mahadji Sindhia, Tukoji Holkar, Ramchandra Ganesh and Visaji Krishna who achieved considerable success against an imposing array of hostile powers. Although far away from their field of operations, the peshwa laid down the policies to be followed, settled their quarrels, and even controlled the details of fighting. He gave such a powerful push to the advancement of the Maratha interest in north India that even after his death his generals continued their work; but domestic political troubles, culminating in the murder of Narayan Rao, compelled them to return to the Deccan in 1773. More than a decade later Mahadji Sindhia, who won his early laurels in the northern campaigns during Madhav Rao's regime, established his authority in north India on so strong a basis that nothing but English guns, aided by the foolishness of his successor could shatter it.

Shah Alam's installation in Delhi as a protege of the Marathas was apparently the climax of Madhav Rao's north Indian policy. The puppet emperor was rescued from the influence of the English whose hostility to the Marathas was no longer concealed. His name was still a precious political asset, and it remained at the disposal of the Marathas—with a brief interruption—till Lord Lake's occupation of Delhi. This involvement in the tortuous polities of the Mughal empire was a legacy of the policy initiated by Balaji Vishwanath and emphasized by Shahu.⁹⁷ It was a contributory cause of the political decline of the Marathas in so far as it diverted their attention from the new historical forces emerging from Mughal disintegration. The rise of the British power in the Gangetic valley did not affect their political calculations even after Clive's political settlement with the emperor and the nawabs of Avadh and Bengal after the battle of Buxar. In the north-west the elimination of Ahmad Shah Abdali, the consolidation of Sikh power and the rise of the Jats were momentous changes which demanded drastic modification of Maratha policy. In

⁹⁷ See A. C. Banerjee, *Peshwa Madhav Rao I* (2nd. ed.), 1-4.

the south Mysore developed into an ambitious and aggressive neighbour, and on the east coast the English secured a territorial base in the dominion of the nawab of Arcot and the northern sarkars. There is no indication that the Marathas sought to formulate new policies in response to these striking developments. They continued to think of dominating north India under the banner of the Mughal empire which was no more than a political phantom, and of sucking the south dry by plundering raids. Madhav Rao was not wise enough to see that the Indian political scene was no longer the handiwork of the Mughal painter, in the north as also in the south he failed to realize the inner meaning of the scramble for power which was tearing into fragments the political structure of the Great Mughals.

CENTRIFUGAL FORCES

One noticeable feature of Balaji Baji Rao's peshwaship was the shadow of internal disintegration which fell upon the Maratha empire in the decade before Panipat. After Shahu's death the office of the peshwa was deprived of the moral support of a monarchy which commanded respect, it was exposed to the mounting rivalry of over-mighty chieftains who aspired after virtually independent power. The third peshwa, lacking in strength of character as also in political foresight, gradually lost control over the discordant elements in the state. For instance, unable to compose the differences between Holkar and Sindhia, he gave them a free hand against the Rajputs who were alienated by their unscrupulous greed. Such failure on the part of the *de facto* head of the Maratha empire had far-reaching consequences. It foreshadowed the disintegration of the empire into virtually independent and mutually hostile political units. The elimination of the monarchy—which had so long served as an integrating factor—was almost logically followed by the gradual elimination of the peshwa's authority as the effective centralising force. This became particularly clear in respect of north India. After Madhav Rao's death the peshwa was virtually eliminated from control over Delhi and Hindustan; Sindhia and Holkar—particularly the former—dominated the north Indian scene so far as Maratha interests were concerned.

For this development, however, it would be wrong to put the responsibility entirely on Balaji Baji Rao or even Madhav Rao. This peculiar political pattern was the logical product of the jagirdari system which had developed during the period following the death of Sambhaji. Able and ambitious Maratha commanders acquired hereditary holdings and dependent principalities with fortified ca-

pitals like Nagpur and Baroda. The centrifugal forces had made too much progress by the middle of the eighteenth century to be resisted effectively by a central authority which could not claim the sanctity and glamour of a crown. Balaji Baji Rao possessed neither the strength of character nor the political sagacity needed for reversing a time-honoured historical trend, and its corrosive effect passed entirely unnoticed among his contemporaries. Madhav Rao had a stronger personality and a bolder policy. Twice he took up arms to suppress Janoji Bhonsle; the treaty of Kanakapur reserved as much authority for the centre as one could expect in the prevailing situation.

Although the Marathas had been active in Gujarat since the early years of the eighteenth century the Baroda state really sprang into existence out of the ruins of the Mughal empire after the capture of Ahmedabad by Raghunath Rao and Damaji Gaikwad in 1753. The peshwa and Gaikwad held half shares of the revenues of the city till its capture by the English in 1817. During Madhav Rao's regime Damaji offended the peshwa more than once by his disloyal conduct including support of Raghunath Rao. After his death in 1768 the peshwa asserted his claim to regulate succession among his four sons. Madhav Rao's final decision was incorporated in an agreement (1771) which virtually recognized the independence of the Gaikwad state.⁹⁸ Three conditions deserve special mention. In case of invasion of Gujarat by any 'foreign force' the peshwa would 'send assistance to' and 'protect' Gaikwad. In time of peace Gaikwad would serve the peshwa with 3,000 horse every year; in time of war the number would be increased to 4,000. The peshwa would not entertain complaints from Gaikwad's subjects, relations, servants, or agents. Apparently the only link between the peshwa and Gaikwad would be the latter's obligation to render limited military service.

Madhav Rao decided two other important questions of succession. Malhar Rao Holkar's successor, Male Rao, died in 1767 without leaving any issue. Raghunath Rao, acting in concert with Gangadhar Yashwant Chandrachud, the old minister of the Holkar state, tried to compel Ahalya Bai, Male Rao's mother, to adopt a child and leave the management of affairs to the minister. To this plan she offered spirited opposition. Madhav Rao decided in her favour. She personally assumed charge of civil administration, entrusting the command of her troops to Tukoji Holker. "The divided authority established in the Holkar state, from the day of Tukajee's elevation . . . remained for above 30 years⁹⁹ undisturbed by jealousy or ambition."¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ Gense and Banaji, *The Gaikwars of Baroda*, II, 174-78.

⁹⁹ Really for 28 years, till Ahalya Bai's death in 1795.

¹⁰⁰ Malcolm, *Memoirs of Central India*, I, 156-64. Khare, III, pp. 1229-30, 1245-46.

In the case of the Sindhia state, Kedarji Sindhia was recognized as Jankoji Sindhia's successor in 1763. Next year he was replaced by Manaji Sindhia, a distant relation of the Sindhia family. These arrangements were made by Raghunath Rao, ignoring the claim of Mahadji Sindhia, the only surviving son of Ranoji Sindhia. The peshwa overruled his uncle in Mahadji's favour.¹⁰¹

In each of these succession disputes the peshwa's will prevailed in the end, but threat and monetary transactions had some part to play. In Gujarat Fatesingh Rao, Damaji's youngest son, defied the peshwa's initial decision in favour of Govind Rao, occupied Baroda, and succeeded subsequently in persuading the peshwa to reverse his former decision and recognize Savaji Rao (Fatesingh's nominee). An amount of 41½ lakhs was the price paid for this change. In the case of the Holkar state Ahalya Bai had to 'use some of the contents of her full treasury' to win the support of Mahadji Sindhia and Janoji Bhonsle.¹⁰² Mahadji himself 'took the management of his patrimony in his own hands, without caring to acknowledge Manaji or Kedari'.¹⁰³ The peshwa's wrt had no smooth run, and in the case of the Gaikwad state the settlement made by him did not long survive his death.

MADHAV RAO'S DEATH

Early in 1770 Madhav Rao began to feel the approach of the terrible disease which overtook him in his youth. He had probably inherited it from his father but we may surmise that it was hastened by overwork and anxiety. Anxious for the future of the state he took measures for training his younger brother Narayan Rao in the affairs of government. But Narayan Rao was too young to bear the burden of the great empire nor did he possess his brother's qualities. Madhav Rao was anxious for him, once he declared with prophetic insight that the word 'rajya' was not written on his forehead. The dying peshwa knew that his uncle would be the greatest enemy of his young successor. So he secured a promise from Raghunath Rao that he would act rightly towards Narayan Rao. He expired on 18 November 1772.

All authorities agree in describing Madhav Rao as a careful and efficient administrator. He did not introduce any institutional change for this failure, however, he hardly deserves any blame. His regime was too brief and too tempestuous to provide that leisure and quiet which administrative reforms demand. Moreover, "he had to contend

¹⁰¹ SPD. XIX, 9; XXIX, 53, 54; XXXIX, 33. Rajwade, XIII, 15-23, 25-27, 44-48, 55-60; XIV, 71.

¹⁰² Malcolm, *Memoir of Central India*, I, 161.

¹⁰³ Sardesai, *New History of the Marathas*, II, 495.

with violent prejudices and with general corruption".¹⁰⁴ So the peshwa tried to make the existing machinery work well, and for the accomplishment of this purpose he was prepared to take infinite pains. His attention to details excites the surprise of all readers of contemporary Marathi letters.¹⁰⁵

A bare enumeration of Madhav Rao's exploits in war is a great testimony to his inborn capacity for leadership. Haidar Ali's military genius was a terror to all English commanders, but he was defeated in every campaign led against him by the peshwa. Within a brief period of less than eleven years Madhav Rao succeeded in extending, and almost consolidating, his authority from Delhi to Seringapatam. These exploits were accompanied by the suppression of serious internal rebellions and a minute supervision of administrative affairs.

Grant Duff observed that "the plains of Panipat were not more fatal to the Maratha empire, than the early end of this excellent prince. Even such a ruler could hardly have averted the downfall of the Maratha empire which was due to the slow and silent operation of many causes—political, military, social and economic. It may be surmised, however, that, had Madhav Rao lived up to his sixtieth year, the forces of disintegration would have been checked and the imperial structure maintained by his firm and capable leadership. It is possible there would have been no treaty of Bassein. Those who believe that the development of human destinies is not quite free from the influence of the contingent and the unforeseen will recognize in Madhav Rao's premature death a decisive event of India's history.

¹⁰⁴ Grant Duff (ed. Edwards), I, 564.

¹⁰⁵ See A. C. Banerjee, *Peshwa Madhav Rao I* (2nd ed.), 182-84.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

MARATHAS AND NORTH INDIAN STATES 1761-1772

PANIPAT

THE THIRD BATTLE of Panipat marks a turning point in the course of Maratha history and forms indeed the dividing line in the fortunes of the Maratha state. During the preceding seven decades the Marathas had not only expelled the Mughal forces from their homeland, but also crossed the Narmada, occupied Gujarat, Malwa and Bundelkhand, established interests in Rajputana, and overrun the imperial provinces of Delhi, Agra and the Punjab. The torrent appeared irresistible and carried everything before it. Not only the Rajput princes and Bundela chieftains bent before the storm, but the Mughal nobility in the Agra, Delhi and the Doab regions appeared anxious to make peace with them. The emperor, by the treaty of 1752, virtually made over to them the defence of his realm. But before they had consolidated their gains and established themselves as the *de facto* ruling power in the territories thus overrun, a challenge was thrown to them from across the north-west. The Abdali king of Afghanistan had made repeated incursions into the Punjab and succeeded in bringing the province under his sway. The sweeping march of the Maratha horsemen up to the Indus in 1758 cut at the very root of the Abdali's rule over the north-western province and naturally roused his jealousy and hostility. The success of their arms in Delhi and its neighbourhood had alarmed Najib-ud-daulah and other chiefs, who were prepared to join the Afghan invader against them. This brought about a situation in which conflict between the Marathas and the Pathans became inevitable. The result was the fateful battle of Panipat fought on 14 January 1761, in which the Marathas were decisively beaten.

CONSEQUENCES OF PANIPAT

Circumstances favoured Ahmad Shah Abdali to no small extent. He found a useful ally in Najib-ud-daulah, who brought over to his

side powerful elements of the Gangetic Doab, as well as the ruler of Avadh. A strong army—perhaps the strongest the Marathas had ever put in the field—marched against this combination under the leadership of Sadashiv Rao Bhau. It obtained control over Delhi and was in a strong position. However, the faulty judgment of its supreme commander led it beyond the safety point, its lines of communication were snapped, and it was starved. The result was annihilation at Panipat. According to reports of persons near the Maratha commander 50,000 troops perished that day on the field, and a very large number of non-combatants were slaughtered; the entire military stores and camp equipage were lost. Not more than 5,000 horse—the most efficient arm of the Maratha army and its pride—escaped the carnage. The toll of the officer class—the sardars and silahdars—was equally heavy. It is said that there was not a house in Maharashtra that did not mourn a son or husband killed in the battle. Without exaggeration one may say that the northern or Hindustan army of the Maratha empire ceased to exist as a fighting force for some time.

The consequences of the disaster did not long remain concealed from friends or foes. To build up the mighty expedition that marched against the Abdali the Deccan had been practically denuded of all its best troops. What remained were second-line troops: one force of which kept watch on the Tungabhadra against Haidar Ali and the poligars of Karnatak, another under Raghunath Rao took post on the nizam's frontier and followed his movements. The country militia and a small infantry kept internal tranquillity and guarded forts and outstations in the far corners of the empire. The force of 10,000 under the peshwa Balaji Baji Rao that had moved Malwa to support the Bhau was too small to affect the situation, and the remnants of the beaten army that escaped from Panipat under Malhar Rao Holkar were too much shaken and demoralised to make a determined stand or put up organized resistance against the victors. Maratha prestige had received a blow even earlier when the Abdali had driven out their garrisons from the Punjab and defeated Dattaji Sindha near Delhi. At a late stage of the campaign the Bhau realized the gravity of the situation when not a pie could be raised from the rebellious landlords of the lower Doab and Bundelkhand. When the Bhau's army was destroyed the situation further deteriorated: Maratha dominance in the north could no longer be sustained by arms. So long as the Marathas could not support their authority by armed might, the northern potentates would not respect their commands. The consequence was that the north—Delhi, Agra, the Doab, Bundelkhand, Malwa—witnessed revolts of petty chiefs, risings of local militia and disturbances of hill tribes. The next few years

marked the shrinking of Maratha frontiers and withdrawing of their rule south of the Chambal.

PEACE PARLEYS AND NAJIB-UD-DAULAH'S ASCENDANCY IN DELHI

The peace-parleys at Mathura opened by the peshwa's vakil Bapuji Hingne and the Abdali's ready response deluded politicians into a belief that the Marathas would immediately stage a comeback to the dominant position in Delhi polities from which they had been so recently ousted. Bapuji Hingne gave a flattering picture of his efforts to obtain by negotiation what the peshwa had failed to secure by display of arms. He met the Shah when he arrived in Delhi after his victory at Panipat and offered to negotiate peace terms between him and the peshwa. The opportunity to have his differences with the Marathas smoothed out was welcomed by the Shah, who before he left the country, sent his envoy, Yaqub Ali Khan, to the Maratha camp to discuss the general situation and settle peace terms. He also made tentative arrangements for the proper administration of the remnant of the Mughal empire. Appointing Imad-ul-mulk as wazir and Najib-ud-daulah as mir bakhshi of the empire, he asked Indian rulers to respect and pay homage to Shah Alam as their emperor. As for himself, he desired only to keep the Punjab and draw an annual tribute of 40 lakhs. The peshwa's envoy wrote to his master that the Abdali looked to the peshwa to give effect to his arrangements so that the imperial administration could be run properly.

The Abdali plan for the future administration of the empire, based as it was on achieving harmony between warring sections, was on the face of it impracticable and unworkable. To assume that Shah Alam would accept the murderer of his father as his wazir, or that the wazir would work in friendly co-operation with the mir bakhshi—his hated rival and enemy of yesterday—was to show utter ignorance of human nature. The wazir, Ghazi-ud-din Imad-ul-mulk, was the protege of the Marathas (and latterly of the Jats) and the mir bakhshi, Najib-ud-daulah, a nominee of the Abdali; in case of differences both would have looked to their respective patrons for support and would have brought on a fresh contest. Even while the Abdali's envoy was in the Maratha camp, Gangadhar Tatya, Holkar's diwan, and the Jat raja Suraj Mal were plotting to drive out the mir bakhshi and concentrate all authority in the hands of the wazir. But Najib-nd-daulah proved more than a match for his rival: i.e. stole a march over him and with the consent of the heir-apparent and the queen mother,

took over the administration of the capital and the surrounding province. He maintained his position in Delhi till his death in October 1770.¹

REVOLTS IN NORTH INDIA

The diplomatic talks at Mathura, though they did not much affect the future course of events, brought temporary relief for the Marathas. The gathering of envoys in the Maratha camp, and the Afghani invader's readiness to come to an understanding with them, raised their sinking stock for a while. Shuja-ud-daulah and the Ruhela chiefs made a show of restoring the Maratha territories which they had seized during the previous year. On the whole, however, the declining prestige of the Marathas was reflected in the loss of their territories in the north. As long as Malhar Rao Holkar on retreat from Panipat remained near Gwalior, his army could help to keep under check the chieftains and landlords of the Doab and Bundelkhand. But his retirement to Malwa provided the signal for these petty rulers to revolt and seize the fertile districts of the Doab. By the end of May 1761 the Ruhela troops, who had only a month before retired, were on the march once again. They seized Shikohabad and moved southward driving out the Maratha garrisons. Within two months the Maratha administration in the Doab completely collapsed. Etawa, Umargarh and Kalpi were occupied by the Ruhelas; and Balaji Govind Kher and Gopal Ganesh Barve were in flight southward to Jhansi in Bundelkhand, where also the prospect was likewise one of unrelieved gloom.

Maratha hold on the eastern hilly region of that province was always precarious, the rajas submitting to their superior authority only when it suited their convenience. Central Bundelkhand, however, with strong Maratha garrisons at Gwalior, Jhansi and Saugor, was regarded as a safe possession. The districts pivoting on Gwalior yielded a revenue of 5 to 7 lakhs, those on Jhansi and Saugor 40 lakhs and 20 lakhs respectively. Routes from the Deccan to Hindustan passed through the region which, together with Malwa, formed the basis of the Maratha empire in the north. The peshwa held it as his jagir and administered it direct through his trusted servants; Vinchurkar ruled the Gwalior districts, Naro Shankar Raje Bahadur those of Jhansi, while Saugor was managed by Visaji Govind. But the spirit of revolt now spread even to this province which was formerly regarded as a safe preserve of the peshwa's power; the garrison

¹ SPD. II, 144, 145, 106, 107; XXI, 202; XXVII, 272; XXIX, 10. Rajwade, VI, 382, 384, 423, 425. Nur-ud-din, 54b-55b.

towns of Gwalior, Jhansi and Saugor soon developed into centres of seething discontent and violent insurrection.

Balju Jat of Gohad raised the standard of revolt in the Gwalior area. He invited to his side the Jat zamindars of Pachor, Uchad, Gujrola, Suklari and other disaffected elements in the surrounding districts and refused to make any payment into the Maratha treasury. In insolent terms he informed the Maratha subahdar that he would adjust his accounts when an army twice the strength of the Bhau's would come up north. His example proved contagious. The Sikabars drove the Marathas out of their country, and so did the Gawhars in Konch and Gulsarai. The Ahirs in Ahirwada also rose in revolt and commenced attacks on Maratha outposts. The raja of Orchha from whom the Marathas had seized Jhansi and the districts around would not sit idle; he saw in the Maratha predicament an opportunity to reclaim his lost territory and broke out in open rebellion. Joined by the Gujars, Dhanderas and Bundelas of Tabroli i.e plundered with impunity right upto the gates of Jhansi.

A still more formidable outburst of insurrection of Bundelas and Gonds occurred in the southern division of Saugor. Most of the Maratha military stations in this part, with the exception of Saugor, Hata, Jaisingh Nagar and Khimlasa, were overwhelmed. Even raja Prithi Singh of Garha Kotah joined the rebels and marched upon Saugor. The two strong places Hata and Jata Shankar were closely invested and their fall appeared imminent; but the timely arrival of Janoji Bhonsle saved the situation. He engaged the rebels near Hata and forced them to raise the siege and come to terms.

This victory, however, failed to retrieve the situation. The Maratha military strength in Bundelkhand was powerless to extinguish the flames of revolt which were spreading throughout the region; the central government at Poona was in no position to render help. The peshwa's treasury was empty and there were no hopes of reimbursing it in the immediate future. The consequence was that the pay of the soldiers remained in arrears for over a year resulting in the return of the Deccani troopers to their homeland and the mutiny of the local militia which joined the rebels. Stocks of supplies and military stores had run low and without funds no provisions could be obtained locally. The condition of the garrisons at Gwalior, Bhind, Jhansi and Karara was particularly pitiable; but neither troops nor treasure was forthcoming, for the peshwa was dying at Poona and his representative in Hindustan, Malhar Rao Holkar, was engaged in a contest with the Rajputs, which left him neither leisure nor the means to sustain the crumbling structure. Bhind soon fell. A new enemy appeared on the scene in November 1761. Shuja-ud-

daulah crossed the Jamuna at Kalpi to invade Bundelkhand in the name of the emperor Shah Alam. He captured Jhansi on 1 February 1762, the peshwa's governor Ganesh Sambhaji deserting to the enemy. North-east Bundelkhand was thus lost to the Marathas, though Shuja's progress was held up at Mahoba.

On the Malwa front also affairs were moving to a crisis. The Rajputs, who were sulking while the Pathan-Maratha contest was on, became restless. From Panipat Malhar Rao Holkar, now the sole representative of Maratha dominion in Hindustan, had fled southward at the head of his contingent and arrived at Gwalior in safety. When he received information of Rajput risings he broke up his camp and hurried towards Rampura which had been seized by the Chandrawat Rajputs, but while he was on the march it was recovered by his officer Krishnaji Tandeo. He next turned to Gagron near Jhalra Patan where another Rajput chieftain, Abhai Singh Rathor, was defying Maratha authority. The place was surrounded; artillery was called up from Indore and the fort blown up. Holkar's firm action helped to restore order in the province of Malwa where petty rebels now laid down their arms.

But Rajputana continued to be a source of danger. The leading Rajput ruler, Madho Singh of Jaipur, was hostile to the Marathas and had withheld tribute for the last two years. Encouraged by the debacle of the Marathas at Panipat, the widespread revolts against them and a request for support from the Jats of Gohad, he contemplated a general alliance of the Rajput princes with the emperor and Najib-ud-daulah to drive the hated Deccanis south of the Narmada. Though unable to effect any such grand alliance, he took the field with 10,000 Jaipur troops, crossed the Chambal, invaded the Haruti division of Malwa and commenced hostilities. Holkar advanced with an army about 10,000 strong and was joined on the way by a Kotah contingent of 3,000. The united forces defeated the Rajput army at Mangrol on 30 November 1761. The Rajputs fought with their usual valour; but they were outnumbered and outmanoeuvred. Out of 10,000 Rajput troops only a few escaped destruction. Their entire baggage and military stores fell into Maratha hands. Malwa was saved and Rajput opposition liquidated once for all. Holkar was wounded. After recovery he retired to the Deccan where he remained till the spring of 1764.²

² For retreat of Maratha armies from Hindustan and subsequent developments in 1961 see *Purandare Daftari*, I, 395-418; Rajwade, I, 285-88, 295; SPD, II, 103, 142-46; XXI, 200-207; XXVII, 262-76; XXIX, 5-10, 12, 29-41, 43, 74. Battle of Mangrol: SPD, II, 5, 6; XXI, 91-94. Peshwa's difficulties in the Deccan: SPD, XXXVII, 9, 24.

DIFFICULTIES OF MARATHAS

When the news of the disaster at Panipat reached Balaji Baji Rao he was dazed by the blow. He became incapable of purposeful leadership; his orders became incoherent and contradictory. Linger-
ing in Malwa for two months for news of his fallen chiefs and cousin, he retreated to his capital where merciful death soon put an end to his remorse and agonies (June 1761). This introduced serious complications in Maratha polities and increased the gravity of the situation created by the Panipat disaster. His confident and counsellor, the wise Bhau, was no more. His son Madhav Rao was a mere boy in his teens. His younger brother, Raghunath Rao, was the sole elderly survivor in the family. Void of all qualities of leadership except boundless ambition, this man of weak and vacillating mind now posed as the champion and saviour of the Maratha cause and tried to seize all authority in the state. This brought him into conflict with the party loyal to the legitimate successor, the young Madhav Rao. Domestic discord and the aggression of his southern neighbours, the nizam and Haidar Ali, left the new peshwa powerless to attend to developments in north India. His deputies, Sindhia and Holkar, without support of the central authority were hard put to holding their own in Malwa and Bundelkhand. Distractions caused by the succession dispute in the Sindhia family incapacitated Malhar Sindhia from acting effectively and developing his political genius. The paralysing hand of advancing age rendered Malhar Rao Holkar's leadership halting and ineffective. Though even now the strongest power in the country, the Marathas withdrew from Delhi polities and took up a defensive role in the Bundelkhand-Malwa region. They required time to heal their injuries; it was necessary to put their house in order before they could resume their imperial venture.

CHANGED SITUATION IN NORTH INDIA

The political scene in north India was rapidly changing. Ahmad Shah Abdali's long-cherished dream of annexing the Punjab was wrecked on the rock of Sikh resistance. The years 1761-72 proved that the greatest Asiatic general of his age could win battles but not the subsequent peace. He failed to reap the harvest of his amazing military successes. His frequent visits to India and the trail of destruction he left behind made him a veritable terror to the Indian world. The Ruhelas had become his staunchest supporters and the Muslim nobility of the Delhi-Agra region had rallied to his cause.

whole-heartedly. His military renown and reputed strength made the Hindu chiefs, Rajput rajas and Jat chieftains quail at the mere mention of his name. The Mughal emperor was a fugitive from his capital and reduced to such straits as to be content to eat out of the hands that would afford him protection. Thus there remained not a single prince or organized power in the land that would challenge his assumption of overlordship of India and oppose his advance. A man of ambition, foresight and purposeful activity of Babur's type would have grasped the opportunity, remained on the spot, seized the sceptre of the empire and started a new line of successors. But the Abdali failed to read the situation rightly; perhaps he was not cast in the true imperial mould. His vision was warped by the narrow limits of his mountainous homeland of Afghanistan and hardly extended beyond the Punjab in India. The rest of India he looked upon merely as a source of money for maintaining his huge armies. He was not interested in administering its affairs. Therefore, when his soldiers mutinied for arrears and pressed for immediate return, the Abdali retraced his steps and marched back to his country throwing away his life's greatest chance. His withdrawal from the scene of his successes let loose pent up forces brought new personalities on the stage and effected such a change in the situation that the Shah no longer remained master of it. Even his long-cherished dream of the annexation of the Punjab remained unrealised. Beaten by the Sikhs, the mighty warrior of Central Asia was forced to make rather an ignominious exit from the scene of his erstwhile glory.

Though the story of the Sikh-Abdali struggle is beyond the scope of this chapter, it must be remembered that the rise of the Sikh power gave a new complexion to north Indian history. For about two decades the Abdali tried to destroy these brave people root and branch; he sent expeditions to exterminate them, razed their villages and their great temple but as remarked by Malcolm, "The Sikh nation... appeared like a suppressed flame, to rise into higher splendour from every attempt to crush them and became while they were oppressed as formidable for their union as for their determined courage and unconquerable spirit of resistance." By the seventies the establishment of a Sikh state was an accomplished fact.

Besides the virtual withdrawal of the Afghans and the rise of the Sikhs another important factor in north Indian polities after Panipat was the consolidation of British power in Bengal and Bihar as a result of the fall of Mir Qasim and the extension of British supremacy over Awadh after the battle of Buxar (1761). Henceforth the British sphere began to collide with the frontiers of the Marathas. British policy was naturally directed towards fomenting troubles on Maratha

frontiers, creating dissensions in Maratha ranks and encouraging the enemies of the Marathas without directly involving the Company in hostilities.⁴

In the fast developing political situation in north India, not much was left for the Marathas to inherit after their temporary withdrawal for licking their wounds. They gathered no political gains from the withdrawal of the Abdali, their greatest antagonist, for the rising Sikh power completely shut them out from the Punjab. As a result of the growth of the British power they were barred from the Mughal subahs of Bengal, Avadh and Allahabad. What was left was the remnant of the Mughal empire: the much-contested Gangetic Doab, the territories of the Ruhela chiefs, the provinces of Agra and Delhi, and the barren hills and arid deserts of Rajputana. In the province of Agra the newly established Jat kingdom lay athwart the Maratha road to Delhi.

The government of Madhav Rao following the traditional policies was determined to occupy Delhi and from there play the role of king-maker and guide imperial destinies. But the time had come to examine old policies in the light of changing circumstances and decide if they did not need new orientation. The Mughal empire by now had been shorn of its power and prestige, and in the new context it was really not worthwhile to follow the barren policy of putting an effete emperor on the throne and fighting his battles. Shah Alam II was a pensioner of the English and a refugee at Allahabad. There was really no possibility of the revival of the empire under his banner. This was not realised by the Maratha leaders. Madhav Rao never visited Hindustan in person to acquaint himself directly with the situation. His advisers, Holkar and Sindhia, lacked understanding and foresight which were needed to appraise correctly the new situation in the north. As a result we find Maratha armies fighting the Rajputs, the Jats and the Ruhelas and Maratha resources being wasted for the restoration of the puppet emperor to his ancestral throne.

With the retreat of the Marathas and the Abdali Delhi, the storm-centre of power politics, had come under the control of Najib-ud-daulah. But his ascendancy at the imperial capital could not be a peaceful one. The moving spirit of the anti-Maratha front in 1760, this crafty Ruhela chief had to make great sacrifices in money, provisions and men to keep the Abdali's troops in the field till the day of reckoning; in addition his losses at Panipat were particularly

⁴ See Sir Alfred Lyall, *Rise and Expansion of the British Dominion in India*, Chapters VIII-IX.

heavy. With his resources thus crippled Najib was in no position to benefit immediately by his ascendancy in the capital. He wanted to be left alone; but his neighbours, the Jats and the Sikhs, would not allow him to live in peace. They challenged his supremacy in the Delhi region and forced him to fight for every inch of the ground he held. His stubborn enemy and most powerful rival was Suraj Mal, the Jat ruler of Bharatpur.

THE JATS : SURAJ MAL

Some references to the Jats have been made in previous chapters. The Jat settlements were distributed over the vast tract of land stretching from the bank of the Indus, through the Punjab, the upper valley of the Jamuna and the northern regions of Rajasthan, down to Gwalior in central India. Historically the most important Jat area lay to the west of Agra; it is here that an independent Jat state developed, projecting itself northward and eastward. Bharatpur was its political centre. Another Jat state arose in the south, extending from the south of Agra to Gwalior, known by the name of Gohad.

The foundations of Jat political power to the west of Agra were laid by a Jat village headman named Churaman in the last years of Aurangzib's reign. But his political power was crushed by Sawai Jai Singh, acting on behalf of the Mughal government in the reign of Muhammad Shah. Churaman committed suicide in 1721; his stronghold at Thun was destroyed in 1722.

Churaman's nephew and successor, Badan Singh, was the real founder of the Jat state of Bharatpur. He constructed four new forts: Dig, Kumbher, Bharatpur and Ver. He acknowledged himself as a vassal of the raja of Jaipur, but he ruled independently over the Agra and Mathura districts, organizing a regular government, building palaces and paving out gardens. He assumed the title of *Braj-raj* (raja of Braja, the holy land associated with Lord Krishna of Hindu scriptural legend) and emphasized the connection of his house with the ancient Yadava rulers.

In his last years Badan Singh left all active exercise of power to his adopted son Suraj Mal who formally succeeded him on his death in 1756. Suraj Mal had all the political sagacity and shrewdness of his adopted father and, in addition, the daring, energy, dogged perseverance and indomitable spirit of his race in an uncommon degree. He had a brief reign (1756-63), dying prematurely in military action; but he succeeded in carving out a powerful state from the very heart of the Mughal empire. Under him the Jats became a power to reckon with, one to whom every one turned for help when striving for victory, and for asylum when vanquished.

Suraj Mal fought his early campaigns as an auxiliary of the imperialists against the Ruhelas in 1745; of his suzerain Ishwari Singh of Jaipur against the Marathas in 1748 (battle of Bagru); and of the wazir Safdar Jang against the Bangash Pathans and the Ruhelas (1750-52). Meanwhile he had defeated the mir bakhshi Salabat Khan near Sarai Sobhachand (1750) and saved Jat territory from his depredations. After the Ruhela campaign of 1751-52 Safdar Jang rewarded Suraj Mal's services by creating Badan Singh a 'raja' and Suraj Mal a 'kumar bahadur', thus giving them 'rank among the potentates of Hindustan'. What was of greater practical importance, he conferred the office of faujdar of Mathura on Suraj Mal. This gave him authority over most of the territory on the two sides of the Jamuna. When Safdar Jang rose against the emperor in 1753 Suraj Mal joined and fought for the dismissed wazir.

After Safdar Jang's defeat his victorious rival, the mir bakhshi Imad-ul-mulk, expelled the Jats from the region south of Delhi, advanced into the heart of the Jat country, and with Maratha co-operation besieged Kumbher (1754). Suraj Mal made a successful defence against 80,000 men led by Malhar Rao Holkar and Imad-ul-mulk. After the besieger's retreat the Jats—with their reputation heightened by their success at Kumbher—plundered the country round the imperial capital. An understanding was then reached between Suraj Mal and Raghu Nath Rao: the former promised not to oppose the Maratha incursions into north India and the latter agreed to acquiesce in Jat occupation of much of the territory of the Agra subah. This arrangement facilitated the territorial expansion of the Jat power till 1756.

During the years 1757-61 the fourth and fifth invasions of Ahmad Shah Abdali were the primary factors in the formulation of Suraj Mal's policy. His territory lay in the danger zone, and his immense wealth provoked the invader's cupidity. In 1757 the Abdali defeated Suraj Mal's son Jawahir Singh at Chaumuha near Mathura, sacked the holy city, and perpetrated a terrible massacre. The territories of 'the accursed Jat' were subjected to slaving and plundering on a large scale. In 1760 the Abdali invested the fort of Dig.

Towards the middle of June 1760 Sadashiv Rao Bhau entered Jat territory, but instead of insisting upon the payment of tribute which had been agreed upon in 1754 he adopted a conciliatory policy towards Suraj Mal. The Marathas and the Jats, however, had conflicting interests in Hindustan. The expansion of Jat territory into the middle Doab was a threat to the Maratha position in that region. On his part Suraj Mal suspected that the Maratha demand for money would be revived as soon as the Abdali menace was removed. The

Bhau unwisely rejected his advice on the military strategy to be followed against the Abdali and probably insulted him by calling him a mere peasant-farmer. After the capture of Delhi by the Marathas (August 1760) Suraj Mal left for his own fort at Ballabghar. The Marathas were left without a single friend in Hindustan.

Although Suraj Mal maintained neutrality and took no part in the battle of Panipat he had no rancour against the Marathas. Indeed, his generosity to the destitute fugitives after the disastrous carnage at Panipat is without precedent in the history of his times. Sir John Malcolm wrote, "The feeling of all Mahrattas towards the Jats of Bhurtpoor is strong from a recollection which still exists of the protection the Rajah of that place afforded their ancestors after the disastrous battle of Panipat. He not only clothed and fed the fugitives who came to his territories but furnished them with means of reaching their houses in the Deccan. In consequence, there is hardly a family of any note in this nation that has not a tradition of a debt of gratitude to the Jats of Bhurtpoor."⁵

The Abdali's retreat from India in March 1761 left Suraj Mal 'as the strongest potentate in India with absolutely unimpaired forces and an overflowing treasury while every other chief had been more or less ruined'.⁶ He was reputed to have a standing army 40,000 strong, 300 pieces of cannon of all kinds, 5,000 spare horses, 60 elephants and plenty of ammunition. His fortresses were well stocked with provisions and guns. His treasure amounted to 10 crores of rupees. No wonder he envisaged a scheme of building from the wreckage all round a strong Jat state that would knit the Jat race into a homogeneous people. The Jats would join hands with the Sikhs of the Punjab, effectively bar the Abdali's advance to Delhi and rule over the region from the Ravi to the Chambal. The geographical situation of the Bharatpur state, based as it was on the barren wastes of upper central India, favoured its expansion north-westward and eastward. It was also the Jat ruler's ambition to rule over Mathura and the surrounding districts in order to realise his long-cherished dream of making good his title of *Braj-raj*. Having seized the major part of the Agra province in the prevailing confusion Suraj Mal required only the rich city of Agra to round off his conquest. This he effected by capturing Agra in June 1761.

JAT-RUHELA CONFLICT: ROLE OF MARATHAS

The next step in the expansion of Jat territory —the reduction of the Baluch lordships in Mewat, "that immemorial robbers' den"—

⁵ *Memoir of Central India*, I, 129 (1880 reprint).

⁶ J. N. Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, II (2nd ed.), 324.

brought on the inevitable clash between the Jat raja and the Ruhela usurper who was then in control of Delhi. The petty Baluch chiefs of the Gurgaon-Rohtak area west of Delhi enjoyed the patronage of Najib-ud-daulah. Towards the close of 1761 there was a meeting between Najib and Suraj Mal, but no effective compromise emerged. In December 1763 Suraj Mal captured the fort of Farrukh-nagar (30 miles south-west of Delhi) from a Baluch chief, who had been Najib's ally since the Panipat campaign. Najib's protests against aggression on Mewat territory were turned down and he was chided for breaking last year's agreement. The Jat raja then marched to Delhi, drew Najib out from the cover of the walls of the imperial fort and engaged him near Ghaziabad, a few miles from the capital. In an attempt to round up the Ruhela's rear Suraj Mal fell in an ambuscade and was killed (25 December 1763).⁷ His army retired in an orderly manner.

There could be no greater disaster for the Jats than this sudden and premature death of their great leader, but they survived this crisis. Suraj Mal had five sons: Nahar Singh, Jawahir Singh, Ratan Singh, Nawab Singh and Ranjit Singh. His childless chief queen Kishori, a bold and wise lady, adopted Jawahir Singh as her son. His claim to succession was challenged by Nahar Singh, Suraj Mal's chosen heir, who had the general support of the courtiers. But Jawahir Singh's boldness and the co-operation which he received from the chief queen secured the succession for him.

Determined to avenge the death of his father, Jawahir Singh approached Malhar Rao Holkar, who had returned from the south to Indore in June 1764 to take charge of Maratha affairs in Hindustan, and arranged to hire a Maratha army of 20,000 horse for 22 lakhs. He also hired 15,000 Sikh mercenaries. He recovered the Jat posts in the middle Doab which had been seized by Najib-ud-daulah, and then led an attack on Delhi (November 1764). Najib-ud-daulah was invested in the capital.

Although the imperial city did not succumb to bombardment Jawahir Singh was joined by his Sikh allies who cut off Naib's supply of provisions and fought an indecisive battle in January 1765. A large contingent of 10,000 Naga sannyasis accepted service under the Jat raja. They suffered defeat in a desperate battle with the Ruhelas. Malhar Rao Holkar had already joined the Jat army.

To the Marathas the Jat-Ruhela contest offered an opportunity to exact retribution for their defeat at Panipat, to show high statesmanship, and to requite the hospitality shown by Suraj Mal to their

⁷ SPD, XXI, 89, 90; XXIX, 23. Nur-ud-din, 56, 60a-70b. Wendel, 83-90.

fugitive army four years back. But for his unstinted help few Maratha soldiers running away from Panipat could have reached their homes in safety. By aiding the Jats in 1765 the Marathas would be rectifying a fatal blunder in their northern policy in 1760 and win permanently a powerful ally in Hindustan to end the isolation which had proved their undoing. Such an alliance would be a natural political development. The Jats from the beginning had been friendly to the Marathas. They had fought with them side by side as the allies of the wazir Sardar Jang. Though attacked by the Marathas in 1754 they had gracefully yielded leaving no rancour behind. The Maratha armies marching through their country always found the Jat peasantry helpful. The stubborn defence of the Jats against the Abdali's raids had blunted the edge of his advance and had benefited the Marathas to no small degree.

Indeed, the Jats and the Marathas shared a vital political interest. Living to the south of the imperial city the Jats remained in perpetual dread of the resurgence of a strong Muslim monarchy which would put an end to the independence they had but recently tasted, to preserve which they were anxious to come to an understanding with a great neighbouring power. They could expect little aid from the decadent Rajputs; who in their hauteur would not befriend the lowly peasant Jat. Moreover the Rajput states had suffered at the hands of the Jats because of their constant aggression and encroachment. Was it not, therefore, natural that the Jats should look up to the Marathas for aid in wiping out the Ruhela usurper, their common enemy?

Thus not only feelings of gratitude, but demand of common prudence dictated that the Marathas should support the Jats in their struggle against the Ruhela usurper of Delhi. In giving them military aid the Marathas would be promoting their own interests in Hindustan. It would accelerate their return to the former position of eminence in imperial politics. There was really no question of potential rivalry between the Jats and the Marathas. However powerful the new Jat kingdom might become, it could never be a serious rival of the wide Maratha dominion, stretching from the Tungabhadra to the Jamuna. The position of the Jat state in the midst of enemies was inherently weak; it would be, as it had always been, content to live and grow under the fostering care of a great power. But Maratha diplomacy failed to show sympathetic understanding of the needs of the Jat state, and to cultivate its friendship. It looked upon the Jat power as an impediment to its supremacy and Maratha energies were directed to annihilating it. So the Jats, who could have served as a faithful and valiant ally of the Maratha empire and become the

spearhead of its expansion, found themselves locked in combat with that power.

As the siege of Delhi continued the Ruhela troops were driven inside, and day and night Jat artillery bombarded the city walls. The country round came into the possession of the allied armies. Jawahir Singh, who several times attempted to storm his way into the place, was foiled by the size of the city and the wakefulness of its Ruhela commander. But famine made its appearance in the beleaguered city. Men began to desert in large numbers and the end of Ruhela domination appeared in sight.

That eventuality was, however, deferred by another incident. Just about this time Ahmad Shah Abdali was reported to have crossed the Indus and making towards Delhi. The news of the invader's approach should have been a signal for the besiegers to finish off the Ruhela fifth column which he had planted in their midst. But the reaction of the allies was quite the reverse. The Sikh auxiliaries of Jawahir Singh, anxious to protect their homeland, immediately dispersed without even seeking his formal permission. Holkar went one step further; he advised Jawahir to make peace with Najib-ud-daulah. His cupidity had been excited by the receipt of large amounts of money from the Ruhela chief who, calling himself the Maratha general's foster son, sought his intercession. Holkar had evinced little interest in the progress of the siege so far and felt great repugnance that the Jat should affect royalty and look upon him as his equal. He made up his mind to double-cross Jawahir Singh and assumed the role of peace-maker. The Abdali's arrival in the Punjab offered him a good excuse for covering up his designs.

Disheartened by the desertion of the Sikhs and the unfriendly tactics of the Marathas, Jawahir found that he could no longer continue the struggle single-handed. He concluded a treaty with Najib-ud-daulah, raised the siege and marched back to his capital (February 1765). Thus ended the great Jat offensive which had cost Jawahir Singh over two crores of rupees. The Ruhela successfully encountered the strongest combination he was ever called upon to face, and once more reigned supreme in Delhi. Not without reason was the Jat raja embittered against his Maratha allies for their perfidious conduct in the affair.⁸

COLLAPSE OF NAJIB-UD-DAULAH'S AUTHORITY

To his bitterness against Holkar fuel was added by the part the latter chose to pursue in the family feud of the Jat ruling house.

⁸ SPD, XXIX, 55, 58, 72, 73, 79; XXVII, 9, 24; XXXVII, 120. *Chandrachud Daftari*, I, 89. *Purandare Daftari* III, 10, 13. CPC, I, 2053, 2457, 2459, 2533.

Nahar Singh, the youngest son of Suraj Mal whom his father had designated as his successor and who had been supplanted by Jawahir in his claim, lived in dread of his brother in his appanage of Dholpur. When Jawahir started crushing his refractory chiefs, Nahar (the lion), who had the courage of a fox, opened secret negotiations with Malhar Rao Holkar for support in his renewed claim to the throne of Bharatpur. The Jat principality was then reputed to be the richest state in India; and the temptation of sharing its hoarded wealth, Holkar could not lightly brush aside. He fell in with Nahar's proposition and involved his government in a military adventure wholly unjustified and wholly unpopular. The weight of the Jat arms was turned southward against the Deccan horse, thus giving a welcome respite to the Ruhela usurper of Delhi.⁹

The disappearance of the Jat menace, however, brought but partial relief to Najib-ud-daulah. On his west the Sikhs had gained considerable success against Ahmad Shah Abdali. They rightly regarded the Ruhela chieftain as the Abdali's Indian agent and could not afford to look on complacently while he gathered strength. Year after year they poured into the Gangetic Doab, raided Najib's jagirs in Saharanpur or turned southward pillaging the country right up to Delhi. In 1767 the Abdali invaded the Punjab for the last time and found that the Sikhs were too strong to be crushed. He abandoned the eastern Punjab, even the western Punjab remained a fighting ground for the Sikhs and the Afghans.

The collapse of Najib's authority in Delhi came as a natural sequel to the end of the Abdali's ascendancy in the Punjab. He had been bolstered up by the Abdali, and when the latter gave up his prospects in the Punjab Najib's authority naturally waned. On top of that his failing health rendered him unfit for the task of governing Delhi in the prevailing situation. He frankly acknowledged his incapacity to resist the tide of Sikh invasions. To Shah Alam he wrote: "Let your Majesty advance to your capital... Your servant frankly represents that he is not equal to the charge in his present situation."¹⁰ He withdrew his deputy, as also his troops and property, from Delhi. He resigned his government to his son Zabita Khan (1768) who purchased peace from the Sikhs by payment of money.¹¹

⁹ SPD, XXIX, 102, 118, 119, 177. *Chandrachud Daftar*, I, 164.

¹⁰ Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, II (2nd. ed.), 299.

¹¹ SPD, XXIX, 99, 102, 105, 119, 121, 128, 148. CPC, II, 847, 110t.

RETURN OF MARATHAS TO NORTH INDIA

Thus by the time the Marathas reappeared in strength in the north to regain ascendancy, the political situation had completely changed. The Punjab was outside their sphere of action; the Sikhs had grown in power there. The Jats dominated the region south of Delhi. The Pathan menace that had disturbed imperial politics since 1745, and had assumed a sinister proportion on account of alliance with the Abdali, dissipated when the Afghan forces of Ahmad Shah were rolled back. In the east the British had gained preponderance. The Mughal empire no longer existed; the fugitive emperor, sitting on a throne improvised by the Company's resident, could claim little authority over his ancestral dominions or respect from their present possessors. His return to the capital and restoration to power could no more bring the Punjab, the Gangetic Doab, Avadh, Bengal or any of the lost provinces back to the imperial fold. The benefit of possessing control over him could be only illusory as his writ no longer operated beyond the palace walls.

In the circumstances a reorientation of Maratha policy was called for. Instead of adhering to the old policy of bolstering the decadent authority of the Mughal emperor and of administering the imperial affairs in his name through a friendly wazir, it was necessary to strike a new path and to chalk out a new line of action. The Marathas might now assume leadership of all popular causes in the north, bringing under their hospitable flag all the Hindustani powers—Sikhs, Jats, Rajputs, Bundelas—who were struggling to assert their freedom. A statesman of rare insight was needed if the Marathas were to regain their lost ascendancy in Hindustan and establish it on an enduring basis. What the Marathas did was to alienate the Jats and the Rajputs, and they brought Shah Alam back to Delhi.

The force that had gone to Malwa with Balaji Baji Rao early in 1761 had retired to the Deccan with him. Malhar Rao Holkar and Mahadji Sindhia likewise came south in the early months of 1762 after the battle of Mangrol. For the next two years the main armies of the Maratha state were tied down at home facing grave dangers in the south; the northern possessions continued to be held, but on a precarious tenure. In August 1763 the nizam, who threatened the very existence of the Maratha power, was decisively beaten on the field of Rakshashbuvan. The assumption of direct authority by the young peshwa Madhav Rao brought a new vigour to the government which was felt in every branch of the administration. Holkar and Sindhia were now allowed to proceed to Hindustan. Holkar arrived

at Indore in June 1764;¹² Mahadji Sindhia soon followed him, but he was uncertain of his position, having been displaced in the chieftainship by Manaji Sindhia, a nominee of the peshwa's uncle, Raghunath Rao.¹³ The appointment, though soon countermanded, could not prevent some mischief. Mahadji Sindhia was unable to pull his full weight in Hindustan unless he knew for certain how he stood in respect of his family estates. The brunt of leadership fell upon Malhar Rao Holkar who after his arrival in Malwa had three objectives set before him: to put down revolts and restore order in Malwa and Bundelkhand and thus strengthen the basis of Maratha power in the north; to wrest back Maratha districts in the Doab which had been seized by the Jat and Ruhela chieftains in the confusion following the battle of Panipat; and to secure control of imperial affairs by bringing the exile monarch back to his capital.

It was not long before Holkar forgot his long-term objectives and plunged in the vortex of Hindustan polities. He was invited by the Jat raja Jawahir Singh to aid him against Najib-ud-daulah. What support he gave him we have already seen. His conduct of that affair alienated the Jat raja. Holkar received a monetary reward from Najib-ud-daulah for mediating on his behalf in the contest. This insignificant gain brought neither glory nor territory, but caused only soreness of heart and created one more enemy for the Marathas. Then Holkar moved into the Doab to demand restitution of Maratha districts. But instead of concentrating his efforts to promote Maratha interest he involved himself in an adventure against the English Company.

HOLKAR, SHUJA-UD-DAULAH AND THE ENGLISH

While yet in Delhi in connection with the Jat-Ruhela campaign Malhar Rao Holkar had received overtures from Shuja-ud-daulah for aid. After his defeat at Buxar (October 1764) Shuja met the Maratha chief at Anupshahar and begged his support against the English who had driven him away from his territories. Holkar was promised money and a share in the control of imperial administration if the allied venture prospered. In a cavalier manner Holkar agreed to support the nawab-wazir with his light cavalry. Thus he committed himself to a distant enterprise for which he had received neither sanction nor support from Poona. He knew nothing about the East India Company's affairs. He had never before been brought face to

12 SPD, XXXVIII, 128, 144.

13 SPD, XXIX, 53-54, 70, 92; XIX, 9; XXXIX, 33. Rajwade, XIV, 71; XIII, 15-23, 25-27, 44-48, 55-60.

face with trained battalions fighting under European officers; in his ignorance of the effectiveness of their fire he despised them and believed he could beat the slow-moving infantry columns with his guerilla tactics. He hoped to secure control over the emperor and his wazir, to get back the Doab districts without striking a blow, and to obtain treasure.

Thus a thoughtless adventure was launched. The artillery and baggage were sent back; the allies moved forward. At Kora Jahanabad they defeated Najaf Khan, the imperial general, who represented Shah Alam, now an ally of the East India Company. The English, who had heard of Holkar's movements, soon arrived on the scene and engaged the allied troops. Holkar's horse hovered round the enemy; but when they tried to come close and assault the English guns, they encountered a steady discharge of grape and shot. Disheartened, the allies broke up and retired, to be swiftly followed by Major Fletcher with his infantry. Holkar crossed back at Kalpi and made for Gwalior (June 1765).¹⁴ The English troops gave up the pursuit and fell back on Allahabad. Soon afterwards Shuja-ud-daulah, having failed to gain Ruhela support, gave up the contest and made his submission to Clive who restored to him his territories. Avadh became a buffer state between the English sphere of influence and the Maratha territories in north India. Meanwhile, the English having halted on the Ganges Holkar was saved from further consequences of his wild adventure and retired to Gwalior. Holkar's reckless adventure could not prevent an alliance between the nawab-wazir and the English which became a powerful challenge to Maratha interests in north India.

HOLKAR IN BUNDELKHAND

Having failed to recover by one blow the control of imperial affairs, Holkar directed his attention to the more prosaic work of settlement of Bundelkhand. The province was in a state of turmoil since the Maratha retreat of 1761. As mentioned earlier, the chiefs of Gohad, Datia, Orchha and Narwar openly flouted Maratha authority and withheld tribute. Their example was followed by petty landlords all over the province. The man who had been in command of the province in 1762, Vishwas Rao Lakshman, possessed neither capacity nor energy needed to control the situation. He had so far contented himself merely with sending appeals for aid to the government at Poona. However, the presence of large forces under

¹⁴ SPD, XXIX, 83, 89, 90, 93, 111. *Chandrachud Daftari*, I; 96. *Purandare Daftari*; III, 12, 13. *Rajwade*, XII, 68.

Holkar and Sindhia immediately brought about improvement in the situation. The rebels were not united among themselves and were unable to put up organized resistance. The only outside contact they had established so far was with the nawab-wazir of Avadh who could give them little aid.

Holkar's operations showed promise of success. As soon as his troops advanced to Seonda, the Datia raja tendered his submission. The fortalice of Mote was stormed. The Maratha forces then entered Orchha and recovered Jhansi in December 1765 after five years of hostile occupation. Making over Jhansi to the peshwa's representative and settling the tribute from Orchha and Narwar, Holkar proceeded in the direction of Gwalior. Pachor was reduced. The Gohad rana agreed to surrender Maratha territory which had been seized by him and pay an indemnity of 25 lakhs of rupees. Holkar demanded 50 lakhs and proceeded to occupy his country. But before he could complete the reduction of the Gohad rana, Holkar involved himself in hostilities with the Jat raja of Bharatpur and had to quit Gwalior. The embers of revolt lay suppressed for a while, only to flare up with greater intensity as soon as Holkar's forces had withdrawn. Though Holkar's diwan boasted of having brought under the Maratha flag country worth a crore of rupees and made it safe for revenue collection, facts revealed an altogether different picture. The Jhansi subahdar, Vishwas Rao Lakshman, spoke of breaking under the charge; his appeals for reinforcements continued to pour in at Poona with the same old regularity.¹⁵

MAHADJI SINDHIA IN RAJPUTANA

A second army, nearly 20,000 strong, under Mahadji Sindhia, Holkar's colleague and second in command in the northern theatre, was at this time operating in another sector. After his arrival at Ujjain in 1764 he spent the first few months in asserting his authority in his own jagir and putting his own house in order. He then despatched a small force to Bundelkhand for the relief of Vishwas Rao Lakshman. In the spring of 1765 he entered Rajputana to demand long-standing arrears. The Rajput princes had on various occasions entered into agreements with the Marathas and promised to pay them tribute. But these contributions they never felt called upon to pay unless demanded at the point of the sword; consequently they were always in arrears. In June 1765 Sindhia arrived near Mukund Bari and invited the Rajput princes to settle the arrears.

¹⁵ SPD, XII, 68; XXIX, 91, 102, 105, 109, 117, 118. *Chandrachud Daftar*, I, 101, 158, 164. *Holkar Kalsiyat*.

Agents from Marwar, Mewar, Jaipur, Rupnagar, Shahpura and Kotah hastened to his camp. Finding the Rajputs in a suppliant mood Sindhia left the conduct of negotiations in the hands of his diwan Achyut Rao Gnaesh and his commander Khanaji Jadhav, returning to Bundelkhand in October 1765 with a part of his troops to join Holkar there.

The settlement in Rajputana went on smoothly. Udaipur, Shahpura and Rupnagar readily made their submission. The Kishangarh chief held out for a while, but a demonstration of force on the borders of his principality brought him to reason. Ajmer was re-occupied and made over to Govind Krishna. The Marwar vikhs, although anxious to avert Mahadji's wrath for the murder of Jayappa Sindhia in 1755, successfully used dilatory tactics to avoid settlement. The Jaipur raja, Madho Singh, whose territory was thalatened by the Jat raja, Jawahu Singh, and his Sikhs allies overcame his old hatred for the Marathas and asked for their aid. Sindhia sent a contingent of cavalry. The report of their coming made the Bharatpur raja desist from further hostilities and retire to his capital. He had another reason for his hasty retreat, information had reached him of secret intrigues to place his younger brother on the gadi with Holkar's aid.¹⁶

MARATHA-JAT CONFLICT¹⁷

The reduction of Jat power had become one of the major objectives of Maratha policy. Jawahu Singh was an eyesore to his neighbours—the Ruhela and Rajput chiefs—who were ready to join in a combination against him. Sindhia's troops in Rajputana were already under orders to support the Jaipur raja in his resistance against Jat aggression, indeed they had contacted the Bharatpur army near Kanode. From Bundelkhand in the east Holkar was prompted to take the offensive on the arrival of Nahar Singh in the Maratha camp in December 1765. He demanded payment of arrears and sent troops to plunder the Jat territory. The proud Jawahu Singh took up the challenge and calling in the Sikhs to his aid, moved southward to meet the Marathas.

An advance column of the Marathas under Tayji Kadam, reconnoitring near Rupbas, was pushed back. A stronger force of 35,000 under Sultanji Lambhate and Santaji Wable that lay encamped near Dholpur was defeated with heavy losses on 13 March 1766. Jawahir Singh advanced to Dholpur, drove out Nahar Singh and his Maratha allies, and prepared to cross the Chambal.

The defeat came as a big surprise to Holkar who was encamped at Gwalior. He had no adequate appreciation of Jat strength and consequently no plans to avert the setback. He was a sick man incapable of directing the military operations any more. He contented himself with the despatch of all available troops under Mahadji Sindhia and diwan Gangadhar Chandrachud towards Dholpur and waited for the arrival of reinforcements from Poona under the command of Raghunath Rao to renew the offensive. Jawahir Singh came to the northern bank of the Chambal, wisely refraining from further action in the summer, and sat watching the movements of the Marathas beyond.¹⁷

RAGHUNATH RAO IN MALWA

Raghunath Rao was a vain little man of weak character. He was reported to be moving north after having failed in his intrigues at Poona to share power with his nephew. He now chose Hindustan as the field for the fulfilment of his aspirations. It was no new field for him, his two previous expeditions to the north during the regime of Balaji Baji Rao had only resulted in adding large debts to the peshwa's treasury and in making confusion worse confounded. But he relied now on his ripe experience and mature judgment. He also looked up to Holkar to second his plans. The young peshwa, distrustful of placing a big army at the disposal of his ambitious uncle, allowed him to proceed north with a skeleton army. When the rains were over in 1765 Raghoba moved northward at the head of contingents provided by his partisans—Janoji Bhonsle of Nagpur, Vinchurkar, Naro Shankar Raje Bahadur and Gaikwad.

In January 1766 he was in Berar. Crossing the Narmada by the Handia ford he marched into Bhopal and exacted nazir from its ruler. He then moved on to Jhansi. To save their country from devastation, the chiefs of Bundelkhand sent their agents to sue for peace and settle tribute. Further north the Jats, Ruhelas and other Pathans were perturbed by the arrival of a large Maratha force and uneasily watched Raghoba's progress, not omitting to send their agents to his camp. The fact of being visited and courted on all sides flattered his vanity; he felt success was within his grasp.

In the last week of April 1766 Raghoba met his chiefs near Bhaner and chalked out his future course of action. The obstinate Jat rana of Gohad was to be brought to book, and then the Maratha armies would enter the Gangetic Doab by way of Kalpi. The next

step would be to establish contact with the Mughal emperor at Allahabad, escort him to his capital and establish him there. En-trenched in the capital and equipped with titles from the emperor—so the Marathas imagined—they could easily crush the overgrown power of the Bharatpur Jat, overawe the Ruhela chieftains of the Gangetic Doab and the nawab-wazir of Avadh, realise long-standing arrears of tribute, wrest back their lost districts, and thus re-establish their dominant position in the north.

The plan depended for its success on swift military action. The northern chiefs would submit only if they felt that the storm breaking over them was irresistible; they would make terms only when they were impressed that opposition to the advancing Maratha armies was fruitless. This powerful momentum Raghoba's progress could never attain. He had none of that touch of brilliant leadership which inspires men to achieve magnificent results far beyond those guaranteed by available resources. On account of the deep-seated distrust between the uncle and the nephew his venture in Hindustan could not obtain the whole-hearted support of the Poona durbar. No army, however strong in number, can fight at its best while lacking the wherewithal to fight: money, provisions and military stores. On his way Raghoba had considerable difficulty in keeping his troops together owing to the low ebb of his treasury. The money expected from Holkar and Sindhia came in dribslets.

Before a single victory was registered over any of the enemies, Holkar—to whom Raghoba had looked mainly for the success of his plan—died at Alampur near Seonda on 20 May 1766. The Maratha people looked up to Malhar Rao as the sole surviving elderly leader to guide them in troubled waters. After Panipat he functioned as the peshwa's sole representative in Hindustan; to him was entrusted the task of re-shaping Maratha policy, building up new alliances, and restoring lost glory. But this assignment was beyond his capacity and training. Personally brave and cool in crisis, he had never distinguished himself as a diplomat. The only rule of conduct he understood and followed in his dealings with friends and foes was that of expediency. His diplomacy was not only barren but positively harmful. It alienated the Rajputs and the Jats. His patronage of Najib-ud-daulah grew into an obsession which did much injury to the Maratha cause.

The reputation of this soldier-chief and the terror of his predatory horse had kept the northern chiefs under restraint and brought some kind of order in Malwa and Bundeikhand. His death produced a violent reaction and gave an altogether unfavourable turn to the course of events. Chieftains—great and small—threw off the assumed

mask of submission and prepared to resist the Maratha demand of chauth. While the Bharatpur raja lay encamped at Dholpur on the Chambal, Ruhela troops were reported to be assembling beyond the Jamuna north of Gwalior. The Holkar contingent, on the death of its master, soon retired to Indore. Incapable of taking decisions for himself or acting on his own initiative, Raghoba in the absence of his mentor and counsellor, Malhar Rao Holkar, felt like a lost child. He could look for relief only to Mahadji Sindhia with whom he was not on cordial terms. It was in such uncongenial climate that Raghoba commenced his campaign.

Raghoba's army of 50,000 marched into Gohad territory in Malwa which was under the rule of the Jat rana Chhatra Sal. The Marathas spread over the entire countryside, laying it under fire and sword (June 1766). The Gohad rana knew that his small force was no match for the large and powerful army of his opponent. Retiring into his fortres, he continued to hurl defiance at the enemy. Raghoba was compelled to sit down before Gohad and besiege the place. The Gohad district is a barren plain; what little cultivation there was, was destroyed by Raghoba's army in its first sweep. The rana showed no sign of weakening and appeared to hold out indefinitely. When Maratha parties attempted to ravage far in search of fodder and supplies they were attacked by the local militia. Raghoba's seemingly formidable army began to dissolve, only Sindhia's troops continued to show some spirit.

By December 1766 Raghoba's force had been reduced to half its original strength. The Chambal was subsiding. Frequent reports were heard that the Bharatpur army, lying beyond the river, was preparing to ford it and join the Gohad chief. It was necessary for Raghoba to liquidate the latter's resistance to prevent a junction between the two armies. He was fretting at his failure to starve out the Gohad garrison and ordered a general assault without waiting to blow up the walls in which mines had been laid. The attack was beaten back by the garrison which inflicted severe losses on the besiegers. They threatened to capture Maratha batteries but were thrown back by the reinforcement sent by Sindhia. It was indeed a black day for Raghoba; he had been disgraced in the eyes of his subordinates. Through Sindhia's intercession hostilities came to an end, the rana agreeing to pay a comparatively small indemnity of 15 lakhs.

Raghoba then proceeded in the direction of Dholpur to meet the Bharatpur army. He was in great distress for want of money and failed to secure aid from Poona. At that time reports were received of the arrival of Ahmad Shah Abdali in the Punjab. This made both the Marathas and the Jats anxious to end hostilities. The Jat envoys

met Raghoba in his camp and told him that their master was willing to pay a small nazar and to serve under his banner when necessary. Raghoba accepted the terms and invited Jawahir Singh for a personal interview. This never took place, as the latter suspected treachery and went away without meeting the Maratha leader. A truce, however, was concluded between the two parties; Jawahir released Maratha sardars in his custody, agreed to pay the balance of the subsidy, and was presented with a small district to the south-west of Bharatpur. Raghoba then left for the Deccan against the advice of his friends and counsellors not so much out of fear of the Abdali but owing to the utter helplessness of his situation in the absence of any succour from Poona. The Afghans were too far off to be a source of danger to the Maratha army lying south of the Chambal. Raghoba's real difficulty was his inability to keep together his army even at its reduced strength. A gulf of suspicion separated the uncle from the nephew, and it was not likely that the peshwa would come to the aid of a general whose ambition provoked his deep distrust. The only course left to the distressed uncle was to abandon the expedition and go back.¹⁸

Before he returned to Poona in June 1767 Raghoba intervened to settle the succession to the vast jagir of Malhar Rao Holkar in Malwa and Khandesh. His chief objective was to gain money to replenish his treasury. He met with stout resistance and in the sequel lost the support of his erstwhile adherents, Holkar and Naro Shankar Raje Bahadur. Mahadji Sindhia was completely estranged and the possessions of the Marathas in Central India were in a state of confusion. Raghoba reached the Deccan in June 1767 as a discredited general and rebuffed politician.

DECLINE OF JAT POWER

Immediately Raghoba's back was turned the Gehad raja and the Bundela chieftains were up in arms once again. Pojan Singh of Tehroli instigated the raja of Orchha to attack Maratha posts. Hindupat of Danghai moved near Jhansi to support the revolt. The more serious threat, however, came from the ruler of Bharatpur. Though he had concluded a truce with the Marathas, Jawahir Singh fully realised its temporary character as he knew they would not fail to renew their claim to tribute when the season was again favourable for

¹⁸ Khare, III, 581, 582, 589-94, 598, 610, 633-35, 644. *Chandrachud Dastur*, I, 100, 104-5, 120, 166. SPD, XIX, 44, 45; XXIX, 122, 124, 129, 131, 133, 146, 155, 158, 164-69. CPC, II, 207, 213, 265, 294, 622.

them. By secret messages he incited the rana of Gohad to throw off the Maratha yoke and promised him full support. He himself openly avowed his intention of coming to an understanding with the Ruhelas and other Pathans to oppose Maratha aggression. However, he held his hand till Ahmad Shah Abdali had retired from the Punjab and then, by way of Dholpur, invaded Bundelkhand at the head of a force 25,000 strong. An additional objective of this expedition was to punish the Gosavi brothers—Umrao Gir and Amip Gir—for their defection in the previous year when they had gone over to the side of the Marathas and secured jagirs as reward for their treachery.

In May 1767 the Jat troops overran the Bhadawar district, established their post at Pinahat, and pressed southward. Even in the height of rains Jawahir Singh continued to march forward. Balaji Govind was surrounded and defeated. Rampura, Gopalpura, Indurkhi, Bilav, Jaloan, Kouch, Akorah—all fortified places—surrendered without firing a shot. The districts of Kalpi, Bhadawar, Kachawadhar, Sikarbar, Tuvardhar Khitoli passed under Jat control. Jawahir Singh then moved into Datia, collected tribute and headed towards Narwar with the object of seizing Jhansi. The Maratha commander there had received sufficient warning to prepare the place for defence, consequently Jawahir Singh retired to his capital by way of Gwalior after promising to his allies in Bundelkhand that he would return to the province in the cold weather and wrest back the remaining territories from the Marathas. His advance up to Datia had the effect of completely disrupting Maratha rule in upper Bundelkhand. Their prestige was lowered, and the neighbouring rulers like Shuja-ud-daulah as also the Ruhela and other Pathan chiefs of the Gangetic region began to cast covetous eyes on the ill-defended Maratha possessions. Only the restraining influence of English diplomacy, anxious to avoid entanglements with the country powers, prevented them from fishing in troubled waters.¹⁹

Fortunately for the Marathas, the Jat menace which had threatened the security of their provinces in Hindustan for the last two years disappeared as suddenly as it had grown. Jawahir Singh became involved in a fresh contest with Madho Singh of Jaipur. After the battle of Maonda (14 December 1767) in which the Jat raja secured a 'Pyrrhic victory', Madho Singh invaded the Jat territory which was defended with the assistance of the Sikhs. In August 1768 Jawahir Singh was murdered. With the end of his stormy career crumbled the power of the Jat state. He was succeeded by his younger brother

¹⁹ SPD. XXIX. 57, 61, 145, 147-52, 177-80, 185, 215. *Kavyetihas Samgraha Patren Yadi*, 193, 194. *Chandrachud Dastar*, I. 215. CPC, II, 524, 597, 599.

Ratan Singh who died in April 1769. A regency was set up by the leading Jat general Dan Shah with Ratan Singh's infant son, Kesari Singh, as the nominal ruler. But Dan Shah was overthrown by a coalition of the surviving sons of Suraj Mal: Nawal Singh and Ranjit Singh. Then the two victors began to fight for power. Ranjit Singh hired a band of Sikh mercenaries who deserted him after a defeat (February 1770). Then he invited the Marathas to defend his cause. Thus began Maratha intervention in the Jat war of succession.

MARATHA EXPEDITION TO NORTH INDIA

The eclipse of the Maratha power in north India in 1761 was shortlived. In June 1768 Raghunath Rao, having been defeated at Dhadap, had become a state prisoner. By 1769 the peshwa was comparatively free to turn his attention to Hindustan. In April 1769 ended the revolt of Janoji Bhonsle who concluded peace with the peshwa at Kanakapur. In north India also the situation was favourable. The Jat power was on the decline after Jawahir Singh's death. Najib-ud-daulah had resigned his government of Delhi to his son Zabita Khan and retired to Naphabad (March 1768). The field was thus open for the Marathas to reassert their claim for dominion in Hindustan as also for control of imperial politics. The enterprising peshwa organized a fresh expedition to achieve these objectives.

A strong contingent of about 20,000 horse set out from Poona under the command of Ramchandra Ganesh Kanade with Visaji Krishna Biniwale as his diwan on 8 April 1769. Their services in the campaigns against Janoji Bhonsle and Haidar Ali had brought them to the notice of the peshwa, but they lacked experience of fighting and diplomacy in the north. The situation in Bundelkhand was grave, and though Malwa was held by Sindhia, Holkar and Pawar who could muster adequate forces to maintain order in that province, their mutual jealousies and lack of cohesion made it difficult for them to join in a common enterprise. They pursued independent lines of action to serve their individual interests. Only a person of great authority and outstanding abilities with deep understanding of the polities of Hindustan could have united these divergent elements under his leadership and re-establish Maratha sovereignty on a permanent basis in the north. Only the peshwa could have fulfilled this role. Ramchandra Ganesh, the person selected for this job, was wholly unfit for the position. A man of average attainments, he could neither evoke the loyalty of his followers nor command their respect. He was wanting in tact, persuasive power and the idealism that makes men forget their narrow personal interests for service to

the state. He was not armed by the peshwa with powers to overrule his subordinates nor did he possess the firmness to take decisions for himself. The entire course of the campaign was marred by violent differences among the leaders—Ramechandra Ganesh falling out with Visaji Krishna, and Mahadji Sindhia and Tukoji Holkar advocating divergent policies.²⁰

There was nothing inspiring in the objectives of the expedition either. The peshwa had merely asked his chiefs to punish the Jat, Ruhela and other chieftains, wrest back Maratha territory in the Doab, raise money, restore the emperor to his ancestral throne and regulate his affairs. These instructions were too general to provide definite guidance in tackling particular situations. There was no directive as to the policy to be pursued towards the Rajputs and the Jats, the Ruhelas who were in possession of the imperial capital, the Sikhs who had broken the Abdali's power, and the English who had taken the nawab of Avadh under their protection. There was no indication as to practical policies for winning over allies who in their own interest would aid the Maratha cause and thus end the isolation which had been one of the main reasons of Maratha failure at Panipat. The avowed policy was one of naked aggression and had nothing in it to recommend itself to the princes or the people whose territory was to be invaded. It showed no understanding of the changing situation in Hindustan, it was obsessed by the fear of the Najib Abdali combination which had long dissolved under the powerful attacks from the Jats and the Sikhs. It was indeed a cardinal mistake of the peshwa to leave the regulation of affairs in Hindustan in the hands of subordinates who were unfit to shoulder the heavy responsibilities and for whose guidance no specific instructions had been provided. Though victories were gained over the Jats and the Ruhelas and the ignominy of Panipat was partly wiped out by razing the walls of Najibgarh, the glittering prize of the sovereignty of Delhi eluded the grasp of the Marathas and an opportunity of winning dominion in the north lost for ever.

MALWA, BUNDELKHAND AND RAJPUTANA

Taking leave of the peshwa on 7 April 1769 Ramechandra Ganesh marched by way of Burhanpur-Hoshangabad. On arrival at Bhopal he laid that place and Raatgarh under contribution and then proceeded to reduce the country to order. Kurwai, Bhaorasra and

20 SPD, XXIX, 87, 219, 224, 227, 230-34, 237-45, 248. *Kavyetihas Samgraha Patren Yadi*, 220-24. CPC, III, 128.

Chanderi submitted. The Khichi country was invaded. One by one Aron, Barkhera, Raghogarh were stormed; the Khichi prince made abject surrender. Bundi and Kotah submitted to Maratha demands.

Meanwhile Sindhia and Holkar, who had preceded Ramchandra Ganesh a few months earlier, were collecting tribute from the Rajput princes. Udaipur which had not paid the annual tribute regularly was now visited by Sindhia's troops. Ari Singh, who had succeeded his brother Raj Singh in 1762, had made himself unpopular by his avariciousness and cruelty. His nobles broke out into open rebellion and put up a child of eight as the rightful heir and successor to Raj Singh. They obtained the support of the Jaipur and Jodhpur rajas and invited Mahadji Sindhia to aid them. Sindhia readily joined the confederates. The other party, when they heard of Sindhia's approach, offered a large subsidy to Tukoji Holkar for his support. This was a very unusual situation. In view of the divergent purposes of the two Maratha chieftains they could not work together. Holkar parted from Sindhia and went to meet Ramchandra Ganesh at Bhaorasa. Sindhia found it convenient to come to terms with Ari Singh as his opponents were unable to pay the promised subsidy. The Udaipur ruler agreed to pay 64 lakhs of rupees in settlement of arrears of tribute; in addition, districts worth 5 lakhs were alienated in favour of Sindhia. The huge sum of 64 lakhs the Udaipur state could never pay, the demand continued to be a bone of contention between the maharana and the Maratha chiefs.

By January 1770 Bundelkhand, Malwa and Rajputana had been made to feel the weight of Maratha arms. The revolts of petty local chieftains that had become a regular feature of these regions had been put down. The rear thus secured, the grand Maratha army was ready to march forward and invade the Jat country to the north.

MARATHA CAMPAIGN AGAINST JATS

The Jat state no longer presented the formidable barrier it did a few years earlier. In its attempts to expand all around it had committed encroachments on the territories of its neighbours and had incurred the enmity of them all. Only the Sikhs had consistently helped the Jats; but they too had been alienated by Nawal Singh. The fratricidal war between him and Ranjit Singh further reduced the strength of the Jat state and made it a prey to party factions and foreign intervention. The Marathas appeared as the allies of Ranjit Singh and in the closely fought battle of Sonkh-Aring defeated

the Bharatpur army on 6 April 1770.²¹ "The Jat field army ceased to exist as the result of a single afternoon's action." There was very heavy loss among the Jat leaders as well.

The entire Jat country now lay at the feet of the Marathas. Their victory over powerful Jat forces enhanced their military reputation. The prospects appeared bright for obtaining control over Delhi. Sindhia advised conciliation of the Jat ruler by offer of moderate terms and renewal of offensive against the Ruhelas. The Bharatpur raja and the Ruhelas sent their agents to seek terms. Nawal Singh offered to pay a large sum and part with those Maratha districts in the Doab which he had seized. But by this time Najib ud-daulah had arrived in the Maratha camp and having won Holkar's confidence, suggested the complete destruction of the Jat power; his forces would invade their northern districts while the Maratha army would reduce the southern Doab. He asked the Maratha chiefs to leave the settlement with Nawal Singh to him assuring them of greater gains from such an arrangement. The prospect of obtaining Najib's co-operation in their enterprise made the Maratha chieftains lose sight of the fact that the initiative in the campaign was passing to their implacable foe. For, Najib, with all his professions of friendship, had no desire to allow the Marathas to have any influence in imperial affairs if he could by any means prevent it. Unable to meet his former enemies in the field he was now trying to foil them by his diplomacy. By directing the Marathas to seize the Jat districts he temporarily halted their advance to the imperial city and gained time to weave his net for their ultimate destruction. He sent secret emissaries to the Ruhela chiefs and the Jat ruler advising them to sink their differences and join him in repelling the Maratha menace. His messages were intercepted. They opened the eyes of the Maratha commander to his duplicity and roused his resentment. Sindhia wanted to arrest him at once, but was prevented by Holkar's intervention. Najib escaped from the Maratha camp in September 1770. Before he could think out other plans to contrive their ruin, death overtook him in the following month.²²

Released from the unhealthy influence of the crafty Ruhela, the Maratha chiefs closed operations in the Jat territory and came to an understanding with Nawal Singh. They levied a tribute of 11

21 SPD, XXVII, 210 CPC, III, 180, 184. Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, III (2nd ed.), 9.

22 SPD, XXIX, 28, 246, 250, 255, 257, 258, 260, XXVII, 214. CPC, III, 155, 161, 178, 180, 184, 190, 193, 195, 200, 204, 211, 216, 232, 250, 263-71, 285, 288, 314, 323.

lakhs and, in consideration of arrears of tribute, made him promise payment of 65 lakhs in three instalments. Nawal Singh agreed to withdraw from former Maratha possessions in the Doab and settle a jagir of 20 lakhs on the former Maratha protege, Ranjit Singh.

MARATHA CAMPAIGN AGAINST RUHELAS

The recovery of their Doab districts from the Ruhela chieftains was the next item on the Maratha list. A large portion of the fertile tract between the Jumna and the Ganges had come into Maratha possession as early as 1752 and continued to be held by them—though often loosely—till their defeat at Pampat. When they evacuated the region, the Jats, the Ruhelas and the other Pathans had seized whatever districts they could lay their hands upon. As the Marathas had now returned in strength they demanded the restitution of their old possessions. The servants of the East India Company, who were interested in keeping the Maratha hordes away from their frontier, advised their protege Shuja ud-daulah to make common cause with the Ruhelas and resist Maratha demands. Nizib's diplomacy pointed in the same direction. The minor Ruhela chieftains' attitude naturally stiffened—they refused to surrender their conquests in the Doab so long as Nizib ud-daulah retained his. But before any combined action could be planned Nizib died, leaving the Maratha general free to mobilise his troops to recapture the territory.

The Maratha army broke camp at Aligarh as soon as the rains had abated and invaded the southern Doab. Its strength and equipment made it almost irresistible. It overspread the country round Etawa, Shikohabad and Kanauj, reduced several forts, laid siege to others and demanded their surrender. Ahmad Khan Bangash offered 22 lakhs of rupees to save his lands from being ravaged, but the Marathas would not accept this amount. Hafiz Rahmat Khan did not favour the idea of buying off the enemy, he wanted to engage the Marathas in battle. However, the key-fort of Etawah, held by Kabir Khan, an officer of Hafiz, surrendered on 15 December 1770 after a few days' siege. The Marathas then appeared on the borders of Kora which was held by the emperor. This excited great alarm at the courts of Lucknow and Allahabad as also in the English camp. But the Maratha army did not move further east, it marched northward towards Farrukhabad exerting pressure on Ahmad Khan Bangash who was practically at the end of his resources. He had to bear the main brunt of the attack and his territory was systematically ravaged. His friend Imdad-ul-mulk who was in the Maratha camp

offered to mediate on his behalf and secure for him the post of mir bakhshi in Delhi. Thereupon the Bangash nawab threw up the sponge and made peace with the Marathas settling his affairs for 10 lakhs, while Hafiz Rahmat Khan agreed to pay 12 lakhs.²³

It was believed that the next Maratha move would be directed against Ruhelkhand to settle accounts with the remaining Ruhela chieftains. The Ruhelas by themselves were too weak to offer any resistance to Maratha advance, they would either perish fighting or submit to the invading army. Either alternative would lay bare the Avadh frontiers to the sweep of the Deccan cavalry. The English in their anxiety to stem the tide of Maratha advance proposed that the nawab-wazir of Avadh should take it upon himself to build up an anti-Maratha front to which they would give their blessing. But so long as the English were not prepared to take the lead themselves, the alliance could not come into existence. The Ruhelas distrusted the nawab-wazir's profession of friendship while Shuja-ud-daulah himself was unwilling to move his troops beyond his frontiers and entangle himself in a war with the Marathas unless assured of the support of British bayonets. Nothing, therefore, resulted from the negotiations started at the initiative of the Company's commander, General Barker.

PESHWA'S DIRECTIVE

While the Maratha army was pursuing Ruhela troops towards Farrukhabad important despatches arrived from Poona criticising the general conduct of the campaign and ordering a direct march on Delhi. From the beginning the progress of the campaign had been marred by violent bickerings between the different sardars. Sindhia and Holkar held divergent views on the terms to be granted to the Jat raja, on the policy towards the Ruhela chiefs, on practically every question that came up for decision, and thus thwarted each other in the execution of a common plan. The peshwa sternly reminded his officers that the main object of their mission was the restoration of Maratha prestige in Hindustan, which had been badly shaken at Panipat, and the attainment of predominant authority in the north. To achieve that object not only were the rebel chiefs and petty rajas to be crushed but the Jat, Rajput and Ruhela rulers were to be forced to disgorge territory seized by them, pay indemnity for their aggressions, and promise tribute as a mark of their submission. The campaign was to be rounded off by the capture of

²³ SPD. XXVII. 214. CPC. III. 314, 317, 330, 370, 505, 517, 530, 544, 562, 571, 587, 588, 593, 605, 609.

the imperial city and restoration of the exiled emperor to his ancestral throne under Maratha influence.

The peshwa viewed with alarm some of the recent activities of his chiefs. They had allowed themselves to be duped by Najib-ud-daula. Now that he was dead not a moment was to be lost in seizing Delhi and taking over control of imperial affairs. Neither his son and successor Zabita Khan nor anybody else was to be allowed to obtain a footing there. The recapture of the Doab territory might wait for a while; only an indemnity might be obtained from the Ruhelas at the moment. To have admitted Najib to an unconditional alliance (the peshwa told his chiefs) was a tactical blunder. He had begged to be forgiven and of his own accord offered to restore Maratha districts (seized by him), pay an indemnity and perform military service; but he had been accepted as an ally without binding him to any condition. At least that mistake was not to be repeated in the case of his son. As the latter was then in the Maratha camp the chiefs could have easily put him under restraint. The peshwa was, however, averse to treachery with one who had been received as a friend. Zabita Khan was to be given a safe conduct to his jagir and to be asked to fulfil the terms his father had offered. On no account were the sardars to allow themselves to be distracted from their main task, the occupation of the Mughal capital and regulation of imperial affairs. Tukoji Holkar, who advocated a different policy and had befriended Zabita Khan, in pursuance of Malhar Holkar's practice, was warned not to obstruct the line of action laid down from Poona.

OCCUPATION OF DELHI SHAH ALAM'S RETURN

These instructions of the peshwa ended the policy of drift and inaction so far pursued and were a triumph for the party of Mahadji Sindhia and Visaji Krishna Biuiwale who had never concealed their distrust of the Ruhelas and had advocated a strong line. Visaji Krishna now demanded nazar from Zabita Khan who, depending on Holkar's protection, turned down the claim. Thereupon Sindhia and other Maratha chiefs insisted on his immediate expulsion from the camp. This was effected and the army marched on to Delhi. Saif-ud din Muhammad Khan, Shah Alam's envoy to the Marathas, was sent into the city to secure its peaceful surrender. From the Jami Masjid he proclaimed the authority of Shah Alam. But Zabita Khan's troops mounting guard inside the fort refused to submit. Thereupon fire was opened which breached the ramparts. The fort surrendered on 10 February 1771 and the Marathas entered the capital with a force

of 3,000 horse. On 21 March the Maratha chiefs waited on the shahzada and presented nazar, professing allegiance to the emperor. They then seized the country round, removed the amils Najib had appointed and stationed their own men instead.²⁴ Having become masters of the capital, the Maratha chiefs stated their price for the emperor's restoration. This included payment of 40 lakhs of rupees for putting him in possession of his capital, the cession of Meerut and the neighbouring districts according to former custom, the right to appoint all imperial officials below the wazir and receive half the nazar paid by the newly appointed functionaries.²⁵ The terms were accepted by Sait-ud-din Muhammad Khan on behalf of the emperor and forwarded to him for ratification.

Shah Alam had been keen to return to his ancestral capital and had sought the aid of the English and their protege, the nawabwazir of Avadh. Apart from political and sentimental reasons Shah Alam was anxious for the security of the ladies of the imperial seraglio in Delhi. The Bengal government, though aware of the value of control over the emperor's person, was reluctant to implement their repeated promises to take him to Delhi.²⁶ Shuja-ud-daulah was likewise indifferent, though he did not hesitate to beguile the emperor with sweet promises and soft words. Failing to receive help from either quarter Shah Alam negotiated with the Maratha sardars while they were still in the Doab. After the fall of Delhi to the Marathas, he left Allahabad in April 1771 and, spending the rainy season near Farrukhabad, arrived near Delhi in the cold season. He entered the capital on 6 January 1772.

The period between the capture of Delhi in February and the emperor's arrival there in December was marked by the recrudescence of violent differences between the Maratha chiefs. The peshwa's despatches had reversed the weak and vacillating policy of Ramchandra Ganesh and the initiative had passed from him to Visaji Krishna and Mahadji Sindhia. Ramchandra Ganesh lost his influence, and a news-letter reported, "all the people in the camp consider him a fool". In a huff he marched away from Delhi to retire to the Deccan. Holkar and Sindhia felt that public demonstration of their differences would ruin their cause and persuaded Ramchandra Ganesh to return to camp. Biniwale was firm; he took his stand on the peshwa's orders and refused to share his command with Ramchandra Ganesh. He in his turn threatened to go away. Fresh orders from Poona put an

²⁴ SPD, XXIX, 89, 265-67. CPC, III, 630, 632.

²⁵ SPD XXIX, 89.

²⁶ CPC, I, 1186, 2688; II, 660; III, 399.

end to the squabbles, recalling Ramechandra Ganesh and leaving the command entirely to Biniwale.²⁷

FALL OF ZABITA KHAN

Within three weeks of the emperor's return to his ancestral throne the Marathas resumed their offensive against the Ruhela chiefs. Najib-ud-daulah's timely death saved him from Maratha vengeance. His son and the other Ruhela leaders, however, could not escape so lightly. Zabita Khan had been called upon previously by Shah Alam to pay the customary fees of succession in respect of the crown-lands round Delhi and in the upper Doab held by him for so many years. Zabita Khan impudently turned down this demand and refused to wait on the emperor and render accounts even after his return to Delhi. The Marathas, spoiling for a fight with the Ruhelas, worked on Shah Alam's feelings. A general attack on the Ruhela country was ordered. The Maratha army, led by Tukoji Holkar, Mahadji Sindhia and Visaji Krishna, joined by the imperial auxiliaries under Mirza Najaf Khan, crossed the Doab within a fortnight of Shah Alam's arrival in Delhi.

The small force at the command of Zabita Khan was no match for the formidable army pitted against him. His hope lay in holding up the enemy in a difficult terrain where their numerical superiority would give them no advantage. With this end in view Zabita Khan decided to follow the strategy which his father had successfully adopted against the Marathas earlier. The Ganges was not then bridged and could be forded only in the winter months in its upper reaches; and if the fords were held, no army could easily enter Ruhelkhand. Zabita Khan decided to follow this plan. He himself took post at Shukartal with 4,000 troops, distributing the rest of his army all along the eastern bank of the river to watch the remaining fords. The Maratha commanders, however, did not oblige him by offering battle on the ground selected by him. Carefully concealing their movements they forded the river in strength at Chandi-ghat below Hardwar in the early hours of the morning of 24 February 1772,²⁸ and attacked the Ruhela troops posted on the opposite bank. The latter disputed the passage for some time, but their chief officers being killed, they were routed.

This decisive victory shattered the Ruhela resistance. The Maratha army then spread over the country. Zabita Khan fled to the inhospit-

27 SPD, XXIX, 265-69. Rajwade, XIV, 3. CPC, III, 605, 625.

28 Rajwade, XIV, 14.

able regions of the tarai at the foot of the northern hills leaving the entire territory at the mercy of the enemy, who did not spare it. Pathargirh, the fort of Najibabad, was invested; it surrendered on 4 March, the treasure and family of Zabita Khan falling into the hands of the invaders. The Marathas thus partly avenged their defeat at Panpat. The peshwa complimented his chiefs in high terms on their splendid victory and expressed a desire that on his return to the Deccan Visaji Krishna Biniwale should be received with the greatest marks of honour.

SHUJA'S TREATY WITH RUHELAS

The other Ruhela chiefs such as Hafiz Rahmat Khan were also involved in the disaster of Zabita Khan and had repaired with their families to the tarai. The Ruhelas had lost everything. Their armies no longer existed, their country had been overrun and their strong places occupied by the Marathas and even their families had become captives. In the unhealthy tarai a severe epidemic was thinning the ranks of the Afghan refugees. In despair the chiefs sought the intervention of Shuja-ud-daulah, who in his own interest was not unwilling to offer mediation. The Marathas also were eager for his good offices. They had set out with the object of punishing the Ruhelas. Their expedition had succeeded beyond expectation. The whole of the Ruhela country lay at their feet. They wanted an ally to support their schemes of eastward expansion and proposed to use their new advantage to bring Shuja into their fold. Knowing the nawab-wazir's hostile sentiments towards the Ruhela chiefs, they offered to make over to him their conquests east of the Ganges provided he agreed to pay chauth to them and helped them in their eastward drive. Shuja's mediation was thus sought not only by the vanquished but by the victors as well. Envoys were exchanged between the two parties; negotiations developed favourably to raise hopes that the nawab-wazir would prove amenable and close with the Maratha offer. Mahadji Sindhia, the leading advocate of the extermination of Ruhela power, played an important part in these talks. He was keen on establishing friendly relations with the nawab-wazir and proposed to visit him in his camp.²⁹

But Shuja was not master in his own house. The English would not allow him to conclude an agreement which would ultimately lead to the establishment of Maratha influence east of the Ganges. The interest of the English Company required that the nawab-wazir should

come to an understanding with the Ruhelas and offer a barrier against Maratha encroachments beyond the Ganges.³⁰ The Maratha plan failed. Under the pressure of the English Shuja formed an alliance with the Ruhelas to attack the Marathas to expel them. On 17 June 1772 was concluded the treaty of alliance, offensive and defensive, between the Ruhelas and the nawab-wazir. In its first part the parties agreed to be united in mutual defence. In the second, the nawab-wazir promised to compel the Marathas to retire and re-establish the Ruhela chiefs in their former possessions for which service he was to receive 40 lakhs of rupees.³¹

This Anglo-Ruhela-wazir axis upset the Maratha plans and brought to a halt their eastward drive. The position of the Maratha force in Ruhelkhand beyond the Ganges became untenable in view of the approaching rains. It was weakened by quarrels between Visaji Krishna and Mahadji Sindhia. They retired precipitately without coming to an agreement with the Ruhelas. The adroitness of English diplomacy succeeded in snatching from the Marathas the fruit of their victory over their Ruhela opponents. On their retirement the Ruhelas re-occupied their country without opposition.³²

END OF MARATHA EXPEDITION

The Maratha and imperial forces returned to the capital in June in a sullen mood. British diplomacy was active in the emperor's council, instigating the monarch to resist Maratha demands. Shah Alam expressed dissatisfaction that he was not given his due share of the plunder of Pathargarh. Moreover, he wanted a liberal income and armed aid in recovering his lost dominions which the Marathas did not appear likely to concede. The Marathas in their turn demanded of him the fulfilment of the terms for escorting him to the capital and establishing him in power. They had not received the sum of 30 lakhs due to them from the emperor. To circumvent the Ruhela-wazir alliance they brought over Zabita Khan and asked the emperor to accept him as his mir bakhshi. This arrangement was made by Tukoji Holkar and Visaji Krishna in spite of opposition from Mahadji Sindhia. The emperor refused to agree. The claims and counter-claims of the emperor and the Marathas exasperated both the parties and led to an open rupture between them. On 17 December 1772 the imperial force was attacked and completely defeated by the Marathas.

³⁰ CPC, III, 396, 399, 413, 503, 504, 547, 564, 622, 630.

³¹ *Gul-i-Rahmat. Strachey Hastings and the Rohilla War.*

³² SPD, XXIX, 271.

at the battle of Purana Qila in Delhi. Shah Alam was obliged to dismiss the anti-Maratha elements from his council and make a complete surrender. Zabita Khan was appointed mir bakhshi and restored to Najib's jagirs in Ruhelkhand, Saharanpur and Meerut.

The Maratha expedition by this time had lost its momentum. News from the Deccan was bad. The master-mind that had planned the campaign and guided its course was no longer in control of events. The peshwa was struck down with a fatal disease and died in November 1772. Sindhia and Holkar, who had differed violently on every detail of policy, would not agree to act together. Indeed, Sindhia had parted company and marched away to Jaipur before the recent attack on Delhi. Visaji Krishna and Holkar sent the nawab-wazir inflammatory messages for his perfidious conduct in the late negotiations, moved into the Doab in the early months of 1773 and threatened to invade Avadh. Shuja-ud-daulah, relying on English support, refused to knuckle under the threats and forced the Marathas to give up the struggle. Madhav Rao's successor to the peshwaship, Narayan Rao, was murdered at Poona (30 August 1773) and civil war broke out in the capital. In this situation, the Poona durbar could not sustain its armies in Hindustan. Visaji Krishna retired to the Deccan in 1774 and with him the splendid fabric raised in the north tottered. The flood-waters of Maratha tide subsided leaving the banks high and dry. The civil strife in Maharashtra consumed the entire energies of the Maratha state leaving no means to consolidate its gains in Hindustan and establish its suzerainty on solid foundations.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

FOUNDATION AND EARLY HISTORY OF THE DUTCH, ENGLISH AND FRENCH EAST INDIA COMPANIES

ENGLISH SEARCH FOR SEA ROUTES TO INDIA

AT THE END OF THE fifteenth century a new epoch began in the history of British commerce. The voyages of discovery of Columbus and Vasco da Gama had removed the centre of gravity of the commercial world from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic. Henry VII displayed great interest in the promotion of foreign trade. He perceived that if England was to take her proper place in the new Europe that was brought into being by the discoveries of the Spaniards and the Portuguese, her energies should be directed towards the discovery of a new route to India other than those secured by the aforesaid nations. And yet both Henry VII and his son Henry VIII were eager to share in the trade with the Indies, though they were at the same time anxious to respect the rights of the Portuguese and the Spaniards over the route by the Cape of Good Hope and through the Straits of Magellan. They cherished hopes that they could find out a nearer passage to India and the East by the north east or by the north west and secure a profitable trade with the East by this route without encroaching on Spanish and Portuguese rights. As loyal Catholics they respected the rights of the Portuguese and the Spaniards, in Asia and America respectively, which had been guaranteed by Papal Bulls, according to the usage of the times.

The English failed in their numerous attempts in the early decades of the sixteenth century to discover a passage to India by the north-west¹. Then some of the bolder spirits among them resolved upon

1 John Cabot, whom Henry VII sent in 1497 on a voyage of discovery to the American coast, reached the neighbourhood of Newfoundland and Nova Scotia. He thought that he had touched the mainland of Asia and had only to go some distance southwards to reach the tropical regions of the East where spices and gold might be got in plenty. His son, Sebastian Cabot, took up seriously the quest of the north-western passage. About 1500 he made a voyage to the coast of Labrador and tried

breaking through the monopoly claimed by Spain and Portugal. Thus English enterprise was partially diverted to another channel. William Hawkins of Plymouth, one of the best known captains of the west of England and father of the famous John Hawkins, made several voyages to the western coast of Africa and to Brazil in defiance of Portuguese and Spanish monopoly rights. He demonstrated that privateering and attacking of the Portuguese and Spanish ships was more profitable than legitimate but futile and laborious occupation of discovering new routes. He was followed by Wyndham and others who continued to trade with the Guinea Coast in Africa in spite of Portuguese protests. Sebastian Cabot, who had previously sought the north-western passage, returned to England in 1548 after thirty years of service under the Spanish crown, revived the project of a northern passage to Asia and fixed the attention of the English on the discovery of the north-eastern route² which had not been hitherto probed.

After several years of quiet, there appeared in the first decade of Elizabeth's reign a host of men who revived the idea of the discovery of a north-western or a north-eastern passage. They hoped that the discovery of such a passage would secure for England the shortest route to China, the Eastern Archipelago and India, and, what was more important, a great deal of the profits of the Asiatic trade which was then jealously monopolised by the Portuguese³.

The trading operations of William Hawkins with the African coast (1530-35), and the voyages of Thom' Wyndham who was successful in opening up a regular trade with the coast of Morocco and Guinea were continued in the meantime and pushed through vigorously, with

unsuccessfully to find some opening to the west (C. R. Beazley, *John and Sebastian Cabot*; J. A. Williams, *The Voyages of the Cabots and the English Discovery of North America under Henry VII and Henry VIII*). Between 1501 and 1505 the merchants of Bristol fitted out four or five expeditions to discover the north-western passage. Henry VIII and Wolsey took interest in such projects. Two expeditions were sent in later years.

2 Sir Hugh Willoughby and Richard Chancellor started in 1553 on a voyage to discover the north-eastern passage. Willoughby died near the coast of Russian Lapland. Chancellor arrived at Archangel and succeeded in opening English trade with Russia, which was entrusted to the Russia or Muscovy Company.

3 In 1576 Martin Frobisher led a voyage to the north of Labrador and concluded that he had found the entrance to the north-western passage. A company was formed for the purpose of trading with Cathay (*i.e.* China) and a charter was secured from Elizabeth. In 1585-87 the merchants of London sent out three voyages of exploration under John Davis who discovered that Greenland was not connected by land with Labrador. In 1580 the Muscovy Company fitted out a voyage to discover the north-eastern route.

royal support. Finding mere protests ineffectual, the Portuguese increased the number of their warships in the West African waters and tried to suppress the English adventurers daring to penetrate therein by force. Queen Elizabeth secretly encouraged this unauthorized traffic of the English, and permitted even ships of the Royal Navy to be charted by some of these traders. A harder type of seamen like John Hawkins and Francis Drake now emerged, fought with the Portuguese off the West African coast, and boldly defied the monopoly of the western seas claimed by Spain.

Thus while one section of English adventurers sought to avoid the Spanish and Portuguese spheres of influence and tried to discover a north-western or north-eastern passage to Asia, another section preferred aggressive attacks on the commerce of the Spaniards and the Portuguese. This commercial rivalry was still more embittered by the religious cleavage and hatred between England, which had by this time become the leading Protestant state of Europe, and Spain, which was the champion of the Catholic cause. Both the Spaniards and the Portuguese were equally firm in upholding their claims to monopoly and met English intrusion by force of arms. It was this open enmity and warfare between England and Spain and Portugal (which became united in 1580), and the success of the former in the war of the Armada (1588), that emboldened Englishmen and made them force their way into the Asiatic trade by the only practicable route, *viz.* that by the Cape of Good Hope⁴.

EARLY DUTCH MARITIME ENTERPRISE

Since the middle of the sixteenth century the Dutch had also been making sustained attempts to find out a route to India and the East⁵. As early as 1565 they had opened up trade with Russia and begun to explore through land eastwards towards China. In 1593, under the famous William Barents, they made their first determined effort to reach Asia by the north-east passage. In his first and second

⁴ The great navigator Drake, in the course of voyage of circumnavigation of the world, crossed the Pacific into the Indian Ocean, and touching the Moluccas in the Eastern Archipelago, rounded the Cape of Good Hope and reached England in 1580. In 1586-88 Cavendish entered into the Straits of Magellan, passed through the Spanish and Portuguese islands in the Eastern Archipelago and the Indian Ocean, and returned home by the Cape of Good Hope. In 1591 James Lancaster sailed openly into the Indian Ocean by the Cape route and reached Cape Comorin and the Malay Peninsula. It was this final act of defiance which 'tore the Papal award into shreds and with it the charter of the Catholic monopoly in the Indian seas'.

⁵ For the cause of the Dutch protest against Spanish and Portuguese monopoly see Hunter, *History of British India*, I, 225.

expeditions Barents could not advance further than the island of Staten. It was in his third expedition in 1596 that he reached Spitzbergen⁶. The first Dutch expedition which successfully reached the East Indies was that of Cornelius Houtman in 1596. He concluded a treaty with the ruler of Bantam in Java and opened up the Spice Archipelago to Holland. His voyage was mainly due to the impulse given to discovery and exploration by Huyghen van Linschoten who had come to Goa in 1583, lived there till 1589, and on his return to Holland published a book dealing with the sea-routes to the East⁷.

Linschoten's book, published in 1596, produced a great sensation in Western Europe and was translated into several languages. He was, in fact, Holland's pioneer in the matter of the discovery of commercial possibilities in India and the East. The translation of his book into English in 1595 might be said to have given a direct impulse to the foundation of the English East India Company. Ralph Fitch, an English traveller, who had reached India by the Euphrates valley and Ormuz, and had visited Goa and Agra, Bengal, Burma and Malacca, returned to England in 1591, with an account of the magnificent possibilities of commerce in the East⁸. Fitch was to England what Linschoten was to Holland, and both succeeded in rousing the spirit of their respective nations.

The expedition of Cornelius Houtman was quickly followed¹ by numerous others fitted out by the Dutch. Houtman himself undertook a second expedition to India in the course of which he perished. Before the year 1601 as many as fifteen voyages had been made by the Dutch to the East, either by the Straits of Magellan or by the Cape route.

One consequence of the union of Spain and Portugal was the closing of the ports of Spain, and even those of the Spanish Netherlands, to the English and the Dutch. The English met the difficult situation by directly breaking into the Portuguese preserves in the East. Apart from stimulating English and Dutch rivalry, the union of Spain and Portugal produced a positive diminution in the volume of the Portuguese trade with India. Moreover, the utter neglect by Philip II of Spain of the Portuguese-Indian possessions resulted in a marked deterioration of the Portuguese power in the East as well

⁶ See K. Beynen, *Three Voyages of William Barents to the Arctic Region* (Hakluyt Society, First series, LIV).

⁷ See A. C. Burnell and P. A. Field, *The Voyage of John Huyghen van Linschoten to the East Indies* (Hakluyt Society, First Series, LXX, LXXI).

⁸ See Foster, *Early Travels in India, 1583-1619*.

as elsewhere. From 1580 to 1612 very few ships were sent from Portugal to India. In 1596 Spain became bankrupt, and Portugal had also to suffer the same fate. When the Portuguese once more became an independent nation in 1640 their supremacy in the Asiatic seas had altogether been extinguished.

The voyage of Houtman round the Cape to the East (1595-97) was a definite and open Dutch attack upon united Spain and Portugal. Spain indeed attempted to close in on the Dutch at the Straits of Malacca and destroy them; she used her influence with the local princes of the Malay Peninsula to shut them out effectively from that region (1598-1601). In 1602 the Dutch concentrated all their energies in the formation of a united and national armed trading company. Soon afterwards their fleet routed the Portuguese near Bantam in Java and secured undisputed possession of the passage to the Moluccas and the Spice Islands. In 1603 they threatened Goa. By 1619 they had made themselves complete masters of Java, Ceylon and the Cape of Good Hope, the two remaining centres of Portuguese trade and power in the Indian Ocean, also fell into Dutch hands soon after.

Even before these successes of the Dutch in the Eastern Archipelago, the Portuguese power in that region had begun to decline. Drake visited the Moluccas in the course of his voyage round the world (1577-80). In 1582 an English expedition started with the object of reaching the Moluccas either by the Cape route or by the Straits of Magellan. The English openly declared that they had a perfect and free right to trade within all those places in the Spice Islands where the Portuguese or the Spaniards had not established a fort, settlement or factory. James Lancaster⁹, who commanded the first English expedition to the East by the Cape route (1591-94), was also at the head of the first voyage of the English East India Company which started in December 1600. He reached Achin in Sumatra in 1602, delivered to the king a letter from Queen Elizabeth, and after having captured a richly-laden Portuguese ship, returned home in 1603. The second expedition of the English Company under Sir Henry Middleton traded with Bantam in Java and with Amboyna, which was one of the richest of the Spice Islands, to the south of the Moluccas. The third English expedition which started in 1607 brought home a rich cargo of pepper from Bantam and cloves from Amboyna.

⁹ See C. R. Markham, *Voyages of Sir James Lancaster* (Hakluyt Society).

THE DUTCH UNITED EAST INDIA COMPANY

Meanwhile the Dutch had also been successfully competing with the Portuguese for the spice trade. As many as fifteen eastern voyages were fitted out by Holland between 1595 and 1601. The Dutch clearly saw that it was necessary to stop small and separate voyages by individual traders and to display a united front to the enemy. In 1602 they combined together the several Indian companies formed within their different provinces into one huge association under the title of the Dutch United East India Company. It was granted an exclusive right to trade with India and the East Indies for twenty-one years and vested with ample powers of attack and conquest by the state. It was a national undertaking; it constituted a national force. It was a direct fruit of the newly-achieved independence and sense of unity of the Dutch nation.

The directors of the Company were divided into six committees, representing the six provinces of Holland which had subscribed to the common capital. The Dutch government controlled the nomination of the directors, audited the accounts of the Company, supervised its instructions to its servants, and appointed an executive committee of 17 members which served as an intermediate body between itself and the Company. The Company was empowered to make war or peace, to seize foreign ships, establish colonies, construct forts and coin money. The Company had, even at its birth, a working capital of more than half a million pounds sterling. It adopted, as its own, the policy of the nation and it willingly spent vast sums of money on troops and fortresses in the East. Its activities were not regulated by a merely commercial and speculative policy. The Dutch government, on its part, felt that the independence and strength of the nation depended on maritime power and commercial prosperity. It supported the Company in all its undertakings, subsidised its expeditions and made it a semi-national concern, a semi-state organization.

THE DUTCH IN THE ARCHIPELAGO

The Dutch scored initial success. After a series of conquests between 1602 and 1641 they concluded a treaty with the Portuguese whereby their conquests and their right to trade in the Spice Islands were recognized. The exclusive possession of the Spice Islands became henceforth the goal of the efforts of the Dutch. Their first endeavour was to seize for themselves the entire control of the Straits of Malacca, the narrow passage between Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula. They

entered into an alliance with the ruler of Achin at the north-western extremity of Sumatra which commanded the entrance to the Straits. On the opposite coast they allied themselves with the ruler of Johore and tried to capture Malacca from the Portuguese. By 1641 the Dutch had become complete masters of the Straits.

The Dutch also secured the command of the Straits of Sunda between Sumatra and Java which formed another and an alternative opening into the Archipelago. The town of Bantam at the north-western corner of Java commanded the entrance into the Straits. In 1609 the Dutch made the ruler of Bantam their dependent ally. In 1612 they secured the territory of Jakarta (or Jacatara) on the northern coast of Java, in spite of English opposition, and seven years later they built on its site the famous city of Batavia which became the headquarters of the Dutch colonial empire in the East as well as the greatest Dutch trade-centre.

Having acquired the Straits of Malacca and the Straits of Sunda which were the two main inlets into the region of the Archipelago, the Dutch seized the best islands in the group either by conquest from the Portuguese or by treaties with the local chiefs. Ternate, the chief seat of trade in the Moluccas, had broken free from the Spanish-Portuguese control and had become a Dutch ally as early as 1607. In 1618 the Dutch secured the possession of Amboyna, the richest clove island in the Southern Moluccas. Their chief aim was to monopolize the nutmeg and clove islands of the Archipelago, as against their new rivals, the English. They based their claim to monopoly over the Spice Islands as against the English on three grounds. They had occupied the islands before the English; they had helped the local rulers in defending themselves against the Portuguese; and they had secured rights of trade, by means of well-defined treaties, from those princes.

The English, however, asserted their counter-claim to trade on equal terms with the Dutch in those islands. They declared that long before the Dutch occupation of those islands Drake had visited them. They vigorously denied that the small coast-settlements and factories of the Dutch amounted to an effective occupation of a great Archipelago. The first three voyages of the English Company had actually traded with Bantam and the Spice Islands. The dispute was worsened by an English interloper's attack on the Dutch at Bantam in 1605, and his indulging in open and cruel piracy. This put an end to all prospects of peaceful accommodation between the two nations. The death of Queen Elizabeth in 1603, and the treaty that James I concluded in

1604 with Spain and Portugal, broke definitely the tradition of English and Dutch friendship and drove them into a commercial war.

THE ENGLISH EAST INDIA COMPANY

In 1599 an influential body of London merchants formed plans for the formation of a Company to monopolize the eastern trade. This was the beginning of the famous East India Company. Already in 1593 the Levant Company had obtained an extended charter permitting its members to trade overland with India. This plan, however, completely failed. Many of those who actively promoted the formation of the East India Company in 1599 had been servants of the Levant Company. It may even be said that "the East India Company was partially an outgrowth of the Levant Company"¹⁰. Queen Elizabeth, however, refused to allow these merchants of the East India Company to immediately fit out an expedition to the East, as she was afraid that this might give a new cause of grievance to the Spanish king who was then negotiating with her for a permanent peace. But the negotiations came to nothing, and the queen was persuaded to grant a charter which incorporated these merchants into a Company and gave them for fifteen years the exclusive right of trading with "India and all the countries beyond the Cape of Good Hope and the Straits of Magellan, except with those territories in the actual occupation of the Spaniards and the Portuguese".

A few words may be added with regard to the organization of the East India Company. The number of subscribers to the Company was 217. The first governor and committee-men (the chairman and the managing committee) were nominated in the charter; their successors were to be annually elected by the shareholders. The governor and committee-men frequently submitted for confirmation all their most important acts to meetings or 'General Courts' of all the subscribers of the Company.

It will be noted that the English Company, unlike the Dutch Company, was at best an association of private merchants for armed commerce in the East with a monopoly right for a specific period granted by the Crown. Its capital was very small, only about £30,000, and it had to raise for each separate voyage subscriptions from successive groups of adventurers who were generally members of the Company or were admitted into it. Each 'separate voyage' was undertaken by a minor group among the subscribers, who furnished the capital required for the voyage, shared the profits and wound up the whole con-

¹⁰ W. R. Scott, *The Constitution and Finance of English, Scottish and Irish Joint Stock Companies to 1720*, II, 91.

cern themselves, the capital being returned to each subscriber at the end of the voyage. These voyages overlapped each other, and the agents of the several nominally distinct voyages traded and disputed with one another at the same time in the East. The capital was almost insufficient for every voyage. In 1601 the queen complained of the slackness of the Company's activities and contrasted them with the Dutch with their huge capital and their great yearly fleet to the Indies. In 1612 the system of 'separate voyages' was replaced by a new arrangement called 'joint-stock'. Subscriptions were raised for several voyages extended over a period of years instead of for a single voyage; but each group of voyages closed its affairs and wound up its profits in the same way as each 'separate voyage'¹¹. Apart from such haphazard organisation there were other difficulties. The English Company was too much regulated by the royal charter and too closely interfered with by the Crown and the Privy Council. The danger from interlopers, who traded on their own account in the East in defiance of the Company, appeared as early as 1605; and the plundering methods adopted by many of them affected seriously the reputation of the English nation.

The authority of the governor and the committee-men (directors) of the Company was gradually superseded by the promoter of each voyage, whether 'separate' or 'joint-stock'. Even during the period of 'joint-stock' operations which began after 1612 the voyages overlapped one another, as in the case of the 'separate voyages', and resulted in similar confusion. From the first there was divided interest between the Company as a whole and the successive groups of subscribers for each voyage. The methods of the Company were sometimes condemned and even actively opposed. Its charter was frequently threatened by the intrigues of royal favourites and by royal grants of patents of trade to the Scotch, who, it was maintained, were not affected by the charter given to an English Company. In short, the English Company had to struggle with a small capital and smaller resources, with no active state support and with no prospects of immediate gain.

ANGLO-DUTCH RIVALRY IN THE ARCHIPELAGO: AMBOYNA

The English, ignoring the rights secured and the advances made by Holland in the Archipelago, tried to form an alliance with the rulers of Tidore and Ternate, two important islands in the Moluccas

¹¹ See Birdwood, *The Dawn of British Trade to the East Indies*. Also, Birdwood and Foster, *The First Letter Book of the East India Company*.

group, over which the Dutch had already established a vigorous hold. They even attempted to plant their influence in the island of Sumatra. James I was allured by the prospect of the marriage of his son Charles with the daughter of the Spanish king, and showed himself openly inimical to the Dutch.

The first Dutch governor of the East Indies, Pierre Both (1610-14), extended and strengthened Dutch authority from Java to the Moluccas and gained an almost exclusive right of trade in that region. His successor, Gerard Reynst, planted factories at Aden and along the Arabian coast, opened up trade with the Red Sea, and strove hard to shut the English completely out of the Moluccas. The third governor strengthened all the Dutch fortifications and consolidated what his predecessors had won. Everywhere the English were ill-treated, their ships captured and their factories destroyed. While there was nominal peace between English and Holland in Europe, there was waged, in the East, an apparently never-ending contest between them. Treaties were concluded in 1614 and in 1618, but no lasting arrangement for co-operation could be made. The English could not achieve either of the two chief objects of their ambition, *i.e.* to get a share in the trade of the Moluccas, and to build a fortified settlement commanding the Straits of Sunda.

Jan Pieterszoon Coen was the greatest of the governors of the Dutch Indies in the seventeenth century. Sir W. W. Hunter compares him in point of ability and statesmanship with Albuquerque, Dupleix and Warren Hastings. He was governor of the Dutch East Indies for two terms, first from 1618 to 1623, and again from 1627 to 1629. Like Albuquerque, Coen insisted on the necessity of getting control of strategic points and strongly fortifying them and of making alliances with the local chiefs. He founded the town of Batavia in 1619, and destroyed its rival Jakarta. He also built up a skilful administrative system and accumulated a large amount of money by means of a lucrative coasting trade, a careful system of tolls and taxes, and a large volume of trade with Europe.

The English claim to a share in the nutmeg and clove trade of the Amboyna and Banda groups of islands to the south of the Moluccas formed a serious obstacle to Dutch ambition and to the accomplishment of the objects of Coen. These islands, situated at the southern extremity of the Moluccas, might be approached from the Indian Ocean from the south-west. If the English should once get possession of these islands, they might be independent altogether of the Straits of Sunda and of Malacca and get access to all parts of the Archipelago. They might even turn the flank of the Dutch hold over

these islands by right of conquest from the Portuguese. Coen, however, frustrated the British schemes.

In 1621 the English gave up Java altogether in despair and lost all share in the pepper trade of that island. As regards the English position in the Amboyna and Banda groups of islands, Coen expelled them altogether from the islands of Great Banda and Pularoon in 1621, and wanted to stop all English trade with Amboyna. He gave secret orders to Van Speult, the head of the Dutch factory in Amboyna, 'to deal with the English "suitably, unhesitatingly and immediately'. There were eighteen English merchants in the settlement living among some hundreds of Dutchmen. In 1623 Van Speult thought that the time had come for putting into execution Coen's cherished plan of extirpating the English in the settlement. He tortured some local inhabitants and obtained from them evidence, on which he based the absurd and monstrous charge that the eighteen Englishmen had plotted to capture the entire station. Then they were subjected to horrible tortures to extort from them a confession of their guilt. Ten were executed; and the Dutch flag waved triumphantly without a rival over the whole group of islands. There was great indignation among the English when the news of this ghastly tragedy reached them; and the East India Company and the general public clamoured for revenge against the Dutch. But, though James I ordered retaliatory measures, they were interrupted by his death, while Charles I had political reasons to be friendly with the Dutch. It was not until the strong rule of Cromwell that the Dutch were forced to render some compensation for this injury.

After 1623 the English retired completely from the Archipelago, and the Dutch had an entire monopoly of the trade of that region. Driven from the Spice Islands, the English turned their attention to the mainland of India and developed settlements on its coast; and though they continued to assert till 1667 a claim to the island of Pularoon and even established a settlement at Bantam in 1628 and a factory at Bencoolen in Sumatra which survived till 1824, they never challenged the supremacy of the Dutch in the Archipelago politically or commercially, until they conquered Java in the course of the Napoleonic wars.

Coen, the great founder of the Dutch empire in the East, followed a systematic plan for the establishment of Dutch power in the islands and the maintenance of their commercial and naval supremacy. Like Albuquerque, he saw the necessity of getting possession of the most important places in the islands to serve as the basis on which Dutch power would rest. He found that it was easy to bring the scattered

islands of the Archipelago under his subjection with the help of an armed fleet and strong fortifications at strategic points like Achin, Malacca, Batavia, etc. He exploited the resources of the islands by employing cheap slave labour working under Dutch supervision. The conquered inhabitants of the islands were enslaved, slaves who were kidnapped from the Asiatic and African coasts were imported, and the subject tribes in the islands were forced to send yearly contingents of slaves as tribute. The soil of the Archipelago was made to yield as it had never yielded before; and all the profits of the vastly increased production were monopolized by the Dutch.

The Dutch monopolized the entire spice trade to Europe, besides enjoying a huge coasting trade with the ports on the Indian and East African coasts; they also reaped a large revenue from their tolls and customs. The skilful administrative system that they set up in the islands, the vigour with which they preserved their commercial monopoly, the cruelty with which they suppressed the local inhabitants, and the enthusiastic national support which their company enjoyed, enabled the Dutch to realise their dream of commercial monopoly, as indeed the Portuguese before them had never done; nor could the English do afterwards.

DUTCH SETTLEMENTS IN INDIA

The Dutch settlements in India, except the fort of Geldria at Pulicat, were all unfortified trading posts and did not constitute the centre or a principal field of their power in the East, either strategically or economically or even administratively. "What took them to India in the first instance was rather the requirements of the Archipelago than of the European market; in other words, it was a distinctly subsidiary interest." The spices of the Archipelago were exchanged for cotton goods from Gujarat and the Coromandel coast.

Barring an earlier abortive attempt to start trade at Surat and on the Malabar coast, Admiral Van der Hagen opened up trade with the Coromandel coast and planned to set up a permanent factory at Masulipatam (early in 1605). Another factory was founded at Pettapoli (Nizampatam); but the oppressions of the local governors were heavy and there was little relief even after a mission to the sultan of Golconda secured *farmans* fixing the duty levy at 4 per cent. Soon another factory was founded at Devanampatnam (Tegnapatam) or Fort St David as it came to be called later (under English occupation), and a treaty guaranteeing a limited levy on goods was obtained from the representative of Krishnappa nayak of Jinji. He permitted the Dutch to rebuild an old fort at Devanampatnam and a factory

at Tirupapuliyur (southern Pataliputra) situated two miles in the interior in spite of Portuguese opposition¹².

In 1610, by negotiations with the raya of Chandragiri, the Dutch were permitted to found another factory at Pulicat. Portuguese opposition, though foiled, persisted for some years and they contrived to effect a raid on Pulicat (June 1612) from their base at San Thome. The factory, being practically destroyed, had to be rebuilt and fortified; and the new fortress, for which hard stone was conveyed from Tegnapatam to be overlaid on its walls, was christened fort Geldria, in honour of the home province of Van Berchem, the director-general of the Coromandel factories. Geldria was threatened soon after its foundation by a prospective attack by a Portuguese fleet in 1615; but the danger did not materialise. It has been suggested that Geldria, being 'a fixed point in the midst of turmoil' (the tragic civil war of succession having broken out on the death of the raya of Chandragiri, Venkata I, in 1614), could have served as a nucleus from which a territorial power might have developed; but anarchy in Karnatak led to its fall under the sway of Golconda¹³. Pulicat continued to coin its own gold pagodas, and served as a place of refuge for the neighbourhood in the days of Golconda degradations that followed.

Textiles, woven according to special patterns sent from Bantam and Batavia, constituted the chief export of the Coromandel ports. Indigo was exported from Masulipatam. Rice, diamonds and slaves for Batavia were also exported. As early as 1612 the Coromandel trade was described as 'the left arm of the Moluccas and neighbouring islands, since without the cottons from thence, trade is dead in the Moluccas'. Apart from spices, the chief articles of import to the Coromandel were sandalwood and pepper from the Archipelago, copper from Japan, tatenag and Chinese textiles.

In 1617 the directorate of the Coromandel coast was raised to the dignity of a *gouvernement*. The chief of Pulicat became the governor and an extraordinary councillor of the Indies. Negapatam, on the Tanjore coast, acquired from the Portuguese in 1659, superseded Pulicat as the seat of the governor and as the strategic centre of the Coromandel in 1689. It was equipped with a strong castle far more powerful than Geldria.

The account of Daniel Harvart of the Dutch factories on the Coromandel coast (published in 1693) tells us that some factories like Pettapoli and Nizampatam had been abandoned, that Porto Novo which was started in 1680 was a prosperous centre of cotton-weaving,

¹² See Schoerer, *Account of the Coromandel*.

¹³ Cambridge History of India, V, 35.

that Sadraspatam (to the south of Madras) was noted for the special excellence of its textiles, that Devanampatanam and Masulipatam were very busy ports, that the chief of the factory at Golconda (which had been started in 1660) was also the Company's agent at the Qutb Shahi court, and that Nagalwanche and Palakollu were noted for indigo and dyeing. There were also factories at Draksharam and at Bimilipatam further north. The factors were graded as merchants of different grades: assistant, junior, merchant proper, and senior. Two chiefs presided over each factory, *tiz.* the first who had general supervision and the second who kept the trading accounts and was in charge of the warehouses. Every one of the factories was more or less fortified.

Auangzib's conquest of Golconda marked the decline of the Coromandel *gouvernement*. The factory at Nagalwanche was destroyed. The profits of trade fell in two years (1685-87) to one-fifteenth, and all the establishments worked at a considerable loss. Van Reede, who had been appointed commissioner to put down corruption and reform abuses, broke the influence of the chiefs of the factories and transferred the seat of the *gouvernement* to Negapatam.

On the Gujarat coast a few attempts to explore commercial possibilities had produced a very sanguine report. Stimulated by the success of English efforts at Surat, the Dutch governor of Coromandel sent Van Ravesteyn to that port in 1615. But he despaired of starting a factory in the Mughal dominions and of getting a *farman* from the emperor for this purpose, though he went as far as Burhanpur in the company of Sir Thomas Roe. Even before Ravesteyn's adverse report could be received, Van Coen, the governor-general of Batavia, had sent Pieter van den Broecke to the Gujarat coast. Broecke landed at Surat in August 1616, and got from its governor permission to erect a provisional factory. In the following year Van Ravesteyn was left in charge of the Surat factory. He contrived to secure in 1618 from prince Khurram—much to the chagrin of Roe—a treaty of commerce. After two years of futile effort, during which no export trade was possible on account of lack of ships, Van den Broecke arrived at Surat in October 1620, having been appointed by Coen as director both of Mocha and Surat. Factories were organized at Broach, Bombay, Ahmedabad, Agra and Burhanpur, which had all been explored during the previous years. The indigo trade¹⁴ became as valuable at Surat and at Broach as cotton, and the profits steadily mounted up in spite of occasional acts of extortion by the Mughal officials.

¹⁴ *Pelsaert, Jahangir's India* (tr. Moreland and Geyl).

The directorate of Surat proved to be one of the most profitable of the establishments of the Dutch Company.

In Bengal the Dutch first established a factory at Pipli, but soon abandoned it for Balasore, which was in turn neglected when a firm footing was obtained at Chinsura on the Hugli in 1653. The Dutch constructed Fort Gustavus at Chinsura, which, along with Baranagar, was held by them 'in perpetual fief' from the nawab of Bengal. Subsequently, they established factories at Qasimbazar and Patna. The profits of the Bengal trade were so great as to overcome and counter-balance all losses arising from the extortions and bribes taken by the nawab's officials. The chief articles of export were cotton cloth, silk, saltpetre and opium, the last of which was consumed in Java and China and yielded enormous profits.

THE DUTCH IN CEYLON

The Dutch penetration into Ceylon brought in its wake their penetration into the Malabar coast. Ceylon was first touched in 1602 when a captain of ships, Van Spilbergh, arrived at Batticaloa and travelled up to Kandy in the interior. He was soon followed by another ship captain, De Weert, who arranged with the ruler of Kandy to have Galle blockaded by a Dutch fleet while it was to be attacked on land by Sinhalese troops. The plan miscarried and De Weert was slain at Batticaloa in a quarrel. The Dutch at Devanampatnam negotiated several treaties with the new Sinhalese king for an attack on the Portuguese in the land; but nothing came of these plans. The Portuguese meanwhile realised their danger from Dutch intrigues at Batticaloa and closed the gap in their hold on the kingdom of Kandy; they occupied and fortified both Trincomali and Batticaloa.

In 1636 Raja Sinha, the vigorous king of Kandy (1632-87), invited the Dutch governor of Pulicat for help against the Portuguese, gave them permission to build a fortress of their own, and promised to reimburse the expenses of their expedition. The Dutch started in 1636 a policy of paralysing Goa by an annual blockade. They resolved to wrest from the Portuguese the pepper- and cinnamon-producing areas on the Malabar coast and in Ceylon.

In 1638 the Dutch bombarded Batticaloa into surrender and Raja Sinha signed a previously prepared treaty which the Dutch were to help in the expulsion of the Portuguese from Ceylon, to be paid for their expenses in deliveries of cinnamon and pepper, and to enjoy complete freedom of commerce to the exclusion of all other European powers. It was also provided, by a trick, in the Dutch copy of the

treaty, though not in the Portuguese translation handed over to the Kandyan ruler, that the Dutch would garrison all fortresses captured from the Portuguese and retain Batticaloa. This deceit remained undetected by the raja for some time.

The capture of Trincomali followed in 1639, but the attack on Colombo did not come off for some time. Negombo, which had been depleted of its troops for the sake of strengthening Colombo, was taken by the combined Dutch and Sinhalese troops early in 1640. The inevitable breach with Raja Sinha came over the question of who was to occupy the captured town. The deceit practised on him in 1638 now came home to Raja Sinha. He, however, agreed to a compromise, by which Batticaloa and Trincomali were to be surrendered to him in return for 10 elephants and 1,000 *bahars* of cinnamon. But after the Portuguese were driven out of Ceylon the Dutch were to retain one fortress; and Colombo was to be dismantled. In other respects the treaty of 1638 was to hold good.

A month after their capture of Negombo, the Dutch secured Galle without any help from the Sinhalese. Raja Siuha would not give the stipulated quantity of cinnamon and sold it to Arab merchants; while Coster, the victor at Galle, was slain by his Sinhalese escort as he was returning from Kandy after a remonstrance with the king. The Portuguese, having been reinforced from Goa, threatened both Negombo and Galle (1640). Throughout the first half of 1641 negotiations for peace were carried on between Holland and Portugal. A ten years' truce was arranged in June, but it was to come into force in the East only one year after its ratification by the Portuguese king had been received at the Hague. Thus hostilities continued until November 1642, one year after the ratification of the treaty at Lisbon. The Portuguese were blockading Galle on the land side while Goa was blockaded by the Dutch fleet. The Dutch claimed to be fighting on behalf of Raja Sinha who was still deemed to be at war with the Portuguese. They considered themselves to be at liberty to extend their conquests. There were further disputes as to the delimitation of the country which was to be dependent on Galle.

In the autumn of 1643 a Dutch fleet under Caron routed the Portuguese under the walls of Negombo. They now strongly fortified the place and refused to hand it over to Raja Sinha. At last a treaty was concluded with the Portuguese viceroy of Goa in November 1644, by which the Dutch got the cession of both Galle and Negombo, 'with the cinnamon lands divided at equal distances between those places and Colombo'. The Dutch profits were cut short by the hostile activities of Raja Sinha who ravaged the cinnamon lands of the Dutch and cut to pieces a body of their troops, taking 400 of

their men as prisoners (1646). After protracted negotiations, they consented in 1649 to a treaty less favourable than that of 1638.

After the expiry of the ten years' truce with Portugal in 1652 war began again. Everywhere the Dutch were up in arms against the Portuguese. A powerful fleet under Hulst, director general of India, invested Colombo both by land and sea (September 1655). The city suffered from famine and disease; reinforcements coming to it were cut off and destroyed off Quilon (April 1656). With reinforcements from Batavia the Dutch stormed the city into capitulation, but it was not spared a sack by Dutch soldiers (12 May 1656).

Raja Sinha had sincerely helped in the siege operations; but he became hostile when the Dutch would not surrender Colombo into his hands. Hostilities openly began between him and the Dutch. He retired into the interior hills. The Dutch were apprehensive that he might seek the help of the Portuguese who still held Manaar and Jaffnapatam in the north and Tuticorin and Negapatam on the main land.

In September 1657 Rijcklof Van Goens, a distinguished servant of the Dutch Company, was commissioned with the task of cleaning up the 'Portuguese corner'. He expelled the Portuguese from the open town of Tuticorin, despatched a mission to the nayak of Madura and crossed with his fleet from the island of Ramesvaram along Adam's Bridge to Manaar. There he effected a landing despite Portuguese opposition and secured the surrender of the place, the garrison having evacuated the fortress and gone over to Jaffnapatam. Marching overland in pursuit of the Portuguese, he fought his way into the town of Jaffnapatam and erected batteries round the citadels, which, in his own words, 'deserved that name more than any one I ever saw in India'. The Dutch fleet could not cannonade the citadel where the presence of a large number of non-combatant refugees worsened the situation and hastened the advent of disease and famine. At last, when all hopes of relief from Goa had vanished, the garrison capitulated (June 1658). Goens next proceeded to Negapatam which surrendered at once. Thus the Portuguese power was fully broken throughout Ceylon and South India. The task now awaiting Goens was that of expelling them from the Malabar coast where the Portuguese power had rooted itself most deeply.

In Ceylon Dutch rule was confined to the coastal towns, the cinnamon fields and the elephant forests. Even here it rested on the local official organization. The Dutch maintained friendly relations with Raja Sinha and his successors and generally respected their pretensions to suzerainty. They encouraged the cultivation of cotton and indigo. They imported serfs from the Peninsula to help in the

restoration of irrigation works and the cultivation of paddy. They admitted Sinhalese members into the Landraads and maintained the ancient customs of the country. Maetsuycker's *Batavia Statutes* were introduced in the Sinhalese country. In the northern districts Tamil law was codified 'under Dutch auspices' in 1707 and taken as the basis for judicial decisions 'so long as it appeared consonant with reason, all deficiencies being supplied from Dutch law'¹⁵.

THE DUTCH IN MALABAR

As early as 1604 the Dutch admiral, Steven Van der Hagen, had concluded a treaty with the zamorin of Calicut. It was renewed on more than one occasion; but as the pepper trade of Malabar was held to be less valuable than the Coromandel cloth trade, the Dutch ignored this coast. The only port belonging to them on this side was Vengurla, to the north of Goa. On the whole the Malabar coast was under effective Portuguese control when the Dutch renewed hostilities in the sixties.

In October 1661 Van Goens appeared with a large fleet off Quilon, and after taking it sailed for Cranganore which was also seized after a stiff fight (January 1662). Soon he occupied the island of Vypeen, to the north of the Cochin inlet and commanding it, and built on it the fortress of New Orange (Nieuw Oranje). The operations against Cochin were complicated and difficult. When the situation became disheartening, the siege was cleverly abandoned: before the besieged knew what was happening, the Dutch had embarked.

In November 1662 the Dutch, with a new fleet from Batavia, renewed their siege of Cochin¹⁶. A furious bombardment, coupled with generous conditions of surrender, like the free exercise of the Catholic religion, secured the surrender of Cochin (January 1663). Van Goens completed the Dutch conquest of the Malabar coast by the subjugation of the chief of Porakkad and the reduction of Cannanore. Cochin and Cannanore, the Portuguese pleaded, ought to be restored to them, as they had been taken after the ratification of the Dutch-Portuguese treaty of August 1661. But the Dutch kept the two places to themselves as the Portuguese were unable to recoup the cost of their conquest and fortification.

15 *Cambridge History of India*, V. 52.

16 The Dutch-Portuguese treaty of August 1661 laid down that hostilities were to cease in Europe two months after the ratification and elsewhere on publication. On account of the English king's jealousy of the Dutch claims the Portuguese, who were his dependent allies, sought to alter the conditions. The ratification and proclamation of the treaty were delayed till December 1662 and May 1663 respectively. It was this delay that enabled the Dutch to make a second attack on Cochin.

The Dutch factories on the Malabar coast, including Vengurla, were under the *commandeur* of Cochin. The Dutch failed in their main aim of securing a monopoly of pepper based on contracts with the local chiefs and secured at low prices. Smuggling across the mountains and the competition of European rivals were serious obstacles in the way. The zamorin was an independent chief and proved frequently troublesome. But the contributions of Dutch writers to knowledge and culture of this area should not be ignored¹⁷.

EXPANSION OF ENGLISH TRADE: SURAT

From the Dutch let us now turn to the English. The three English presidencies of Madras, Bombay and Calcutta were all founded in the seventeenth century. Though Madras became an English settlement (1639-40) many years before the acquisition of Bombay (1668) their earliest journeys and settlements in India were on the west coast. More than two decades before the establishment of the Company Thomas Stephens visited the western coast of India. As the first Englishman to visit that region, he reached Goa in 1579 and resided there for many years. His presence in Goa and his experience of India enabled him to help several of his countrymen who found their way to this country within a few years after him. In 1583 Ralph Fitch and a few other Englishmen reached India by way of the Persian Gulf. After them came John Mildenhall, a London merchant, who reached Agra in 1603 after an overland journey of nearly four years. In 1607 Captain William Hawkins landed at Surat with a view to securing a footing for trade under the protection of the Mughal empire then ruled by Jahangir. The earlier voyages of the Company had been directed mainly towards the spice trade of the Archipelago.

Hawkins journeyed to Agra, presented himself before the emperor, and soon ingratiated himself into imperial favour¹⁸. But Portuguese influence was then dominant at the Mughal court, and Hawkins failed to obtain any grant for trade or even permission to erect a factory at Surat. In 1611 an English captain, Middleton, landed at Swally

17 Baldatus wrote a description of Ceylon and the Malabar coast which was published in 1672. Rogerius spent some years at Pulicat in the thirties of the seventeenth century and wrote a book, *Gentilissimus Reseratus*, which has been described as 'perhaps the most complete account of South Indian Hinduism, though by far the earliest'. Under the patronage of Van Reede was published, in 1678 and succeeding years, a valuable work, *Hortus Malabaricus*, of which the chief author was Cascorius, a minister of the Reformed Church.

18 Much of what Hawkins wrote is lost, but his *A Brief Discourse of the Great Mogul* has survived.

near Surat in spite of Portuguese opposition and secured permission to trade temporarily at Surat, from the Mughal governor of the place. In 1612 an English fleet under Captain Best destroyed an entire Portuguese fleet in the roadstead near Surat; thus the tradition of Portuguese naval supremacy was broken. The Mughals realised that the English could fight as well as the Portuguese, if not better. An English factory was permanently established at Surat in 1612.

Surat may very well claim the distinction of being the historic soil where the British empire in the East first took root. Here the English traded largely in the fine cotton fabrics and muslins of upper India, as well as in indigo which was cultivated in large quantities in the neighbourhood of Agra. Surat was one of the chief centres of maritime trade from the Straits of Malacca to the Persian Gulf; and caravans started from it for all the inland parts of India and for the great cities of Golconda, Agra, Delhi and Lahore. Indeed, it was from Surat that the English extended inland their trading operations and built subordinate factories at Ahmedabad, Burhanpur, Ajmer and Agra.

In the initial stage, however, there were difficulties. Thomas Aldworth, a merchant of great energy and determination, remained at Surat, taking whatever advantage he could out of Best's victory. He secured permission for the establishment of factories—apart from that of Surat—at three other places on the Gulf of Cambay. But the trade of the English was not prosperous: the Indian merchants were tired of their constant hostilities with the Portuguese, and Aldworth could lead only a fitful existence.

In October 1614 a large English fleet under Captain Nicholas Downton reached Swally, the port of Surat. The Portuguese viceroy was roused to a supreme effort. He collected all his forces and sailed to Surat with the intention of first crushing the English intruders and then punishing the Mughals who had become their allies. A running fight took place (January 1615) which ended in the complete defeat of the Portuguese and the severance of their line of communication along the coast from Diu to Goa. The prestige of the English increased vastly; Downton, the English captain, was honourably received by the Mughal governor. Now the bulk of the trade of Surat and the Gulf of Cambay was diverted into English hands. From this date the decline of the Portuguese power was rapid; their prestige was completely shaken and English naval and commercial supremacy over them was permanently secured.

Anxious to push forward the advantages already gained, Aldworth argued that there should be an English ambassador of distinction at the Mughal court, 'such a one, whose person may breed regard'. Sir Thomas Roe was chosen for this purpose, he being a gentleman of

pregnant understanding, well-spoken, learned, industrious, of a comely personage, and one of whom they are in hopes that he may work much good for the Company¹⁹.

Roe presented himself before Jahangir in 1616. After many refusals and evasions, he succeeded in presenting to the emperor the draft of a treaty to be concluded between the English and the Mughals, according to which the English Company was to have complete liberty of trade and permission to establish factories in any part of the empire. But Jahangir only promised by word of mouth to agree to the conditions of the treaty and did not formally ratify it. All that Roe was ultimately able to secure was a permit for the English to reside at Surat and travel freely into the interior of the country. He received from prince Khurram, who was then viceroy of Gujarat, a formal grant to the same effect. On the whole, Roe's embassy should be regarded as a signal triumph for the English. His judgment and tact won for him Jahangir's condescension, affability and friendliness; and this made the English 'shine in native eyes with lustre reflected from Imperial glory'.

By 1616 the English had contrived to establish four factories at Ahmedabad, Burhanpur (on the Tapti), Agra and Surat, while an attempt was made to oust the Portuguese from Cochin and destroy their influence in Malabar. Through the efforts of Best and Downton, Aldworth and Roe, the English factory at Surat attained to a fairly high degree of reputation. English courage and naval skill were feared and respected and the Indian merchants soon found that the English were clever traders and good bargainers. They were equally fortunate in the Persian Gulf, where Portuguese influence had been steadily declining. As early as 1603 the shah of Persia had appealed to France for help against the Portuguese in Ormuz. In 1610 he made the same appeal to the English, and eight years later he permitted them to open trade with the port of Jask near the entrance to the Persian Gulf. In 1620 the English gained a victory over the Portuguese which secured for them great influence and respect in the Persian Gulf. Two years later they co-operated with the Persians and captured Ormuz from the Portuguese. The capture of Ormuz weakened the trade and strength of the Portuguese port of Diu. Shortly afterwards the Portuguese were completely driven out of the Gulf of Cambay. In 1629 and 1630 the English secured further victories and they were entrusted by the Mughal emperor with the duty of keeping watch over the seas and safeguarding the annual fleet of pilgrim ships that travel-

¹⁹ See Foster, *Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, 1615-19*, 2 vols. (Hakluyt Society, 1899).

led from India to the Red Sea. Thus the English at Surat were looked up to for the purpose of keeping open the sea-way for pilgrimage to the holy cities of Islam. As Hunter says, "Surat illustrates the position which the English quickly secured in the economy of the Mughal Empire, as a sure source of revenue, as sea-police for the coast, and the patrol of the ocean-path to Mecca, gradually developing into negotiators on behalf of the native Government."²⁰

In 1630 the trade of Surat had grown to such dimensions, that the directors constituted it into the chief of the English settlements in the East and subordinated even distant Bantam in Java to its control. When the Portuguese at Goa saw that their position in the west coast of India was threatened by the English from Surat, their viceroy entered into negotiations with the English president of Surat for the establishment of free trade between the two nations in India (1634). The Dutch, who had established their own factory at Surat in 1616, were powerless to compete with the English on equal terms on the west coast. They held possession of Cochin and had a share in the pepper trade of Malabar. But they were not at all able to gain any influence either at the Mughal court or with the Mughal viceroy of Gujarat. They, however, established themselves in greater strength on the Bengal coast, which was comparatively within easy reach of Java and the Archipelago. As early as 1609 they had established a fortified settlement at Pulicat to the north of Madras. Here they showed the same jealousy of the English as in the Spice Islands and contrived to drive them out entirely after 1623. But the English and the Dutch competed for the trade of Masulipatam which was the chief sea-port of the great inland kingdom of Golconda and largely traded in the diamonds, rubies and textiles of that region. In 1614, and again in 1624, the English had serious quarrels with the Dutch who tried to win over the local ruler to their side. In 1628 the English abandoned Masulipatam in despair and attempted to settle at Armagam (near Dugarazpatnam) in the present Nellore district. Only two years afterwards they were able to revive their factory at Masulipatam. Chinsura on the Hughli river, the most inland point of the Gangetic delta which was then accessible to ocean-going vessels, was also settled by the Dutch. It was only with the foundation of Madras by the English in 1639, their arrival at Hughli in 1650 and their establishment of a factory at Balasore in north Orissa that the position of the English on the eastern coast became strong and permanent.

Meanwhile the prosperity of Surat was threatened by a terrible famine, followed by pestilence, which broke out in Gujarat in 1631

²⁰ *History of British India*, II, 68.

and desolated whole district and entire cities. Many English merchants fell victim to the epidemic, while the local population of Surat died by thousands. It took a number of years for the English to recover from this blow. The English keenly felt the insecurity of their position in Gujarat and on one occasion withdrew their factories from Ahmedabad and Broach; they even thought of abandoning Surat and removing to some other place. In addition, Courten's Association injured the trade and reputation of the English factors at Surat by its acts of piracy in the Indian waters. The interruption to the growth of Surat was, however, temporary. In 1657 it was constituted the sole presidency of the English in India.

COMPANY AND HOME GOVERNMENT

The East India Company was well known and popular at the court of James I. Sir Thomas Smythe, who was the Company's governor until 1621 with but short breaks, saw that royal sympathy would be an additional source of strength and security to its commercial interest. The Company took into its confidence certain influential nobles at court, made an application to the king for renewal of its privileges, and submitted a memorial explaining the origin of its rights (1609). Thus appealed to and flattered, James decided not to be outdone in generosity even by Elizabeth. He granted a fresh charter to the Company which did not limit monopoly to a period of 15 years as the first charter had done, but only stipulated that its privileges would be withdrawn on three years' notice if the India trade, as conducted by the Company, should not prove profitable to the realm.

Till now the Company had carried on its business on the basis of 'separate voyages'. Each voyage was undertaken by one or more members of the Company who subscribed the necessary capital, hired the ships and loaded them with goods. After the disposal of these goods in India and elsewhere the ships were re-loaded with Eastern cargoes and brought back to England where the imported goods were sold, accounts were made up; each subscriber received back his capital with such profits as had accrued during the transactions. No member who had not subscribed had any interest in the voyage; he could neither claim a share of the profit nor be held responsible for any share of the loss. A Company trading in this manner was called a 'regulated Company'.

In 1612 the Company put an end to the system of 'separate voyages' and adopted the principle of 'joint-stock'. The capital was now jointly subscribed by all members of the Company, and all of them shared profit or loss in proportion to their respective shares in

the capital. It was undoubtedly an improvement on the previous system. It continued on a temporary basis till 1657. In that year it was placed on a permanent footing and continued till 1708.²¹

Downton, who commanded the first fleet sent out by the Company on the new 'joint-stock' basis, was authorized by James to apply martial law to his men in case of insubordination and advised him not to stir up bad blood among the different European nations trading in the East. The Company drew up in 1618 two formal declarations of complaints, addressed to the king and the privy council respectively, against the Dutch treatment of the English in the East. A joint board of English and Dutch commissioners was appointed to inquire into these complaints, and it arrived at a decision which was satisfactory to both the parties to all outward appearances.

When news of the Amboyna tragedy reached England, the Company urged the king to put pressure on the Dutch government to punish the guilty persons and render compensation for the losses that the English had sustained. James ordered that an English fleet should be on the look-out for Dutch ships from the East Indies, capture them and keep them fast in English ports till adequate reparation should have been made. This order did not, however, produce any effect on the Dutch and soon after James died (1625). The negotiations for reparation for Amboyna were immediately broken off. The Company, not knowing what to do, thought that there was nothing for it but to seek new fields of trade and to withdraw its servants from the East. It seemed as if the Company was on the brink of a crisis.

Soon after his accession Charles became involved in a war with Spain and the empire; his revenue was not sufficient for his expenditure and he was staggering under a load of debt. He entered into an engagement with the Dutch, promising to assist them, and it appeared very unlikely that he would break with them in Europe, merely for the wrong that they had done to his subjects in the East. The Company, however, felt hopeful that the king would see that justice was done to it for Amboyna, and he was clever enough to recognize the money-value of the loyalty and friendship of the Company. He pretended to be angry at the obstinate refusal of the Dutch to render compensation for Amboyna and threatened to carry into effect the measures of reprisal which James had threatened them with.

About this time there appeared a number of writers who, under the pretext of free trade, urged, as one of the national grievances against the king, the desirability of throwing open the India trade

²¹ See W. R. Scott, *Joint Stock Companies to 1720*. II, 89-127.

to all. There had been, even before this time, private traders (or, as they came to be called, interlopers) who traded with India and the East, in violation of the Company's monopoly and without its permission. To them it now seemed the best opportunity to assail the constitutional validity of the royal charter to the Company, to question the legal basis of its monopoly, and to agitate for freedom of the Indian trade. The Company became alarmed and presented a memorial to the House of Commons, explaining the benefits accruing to the realm from the India trade, and praying for its support²². While propitiating the Commons, the Company was careful not to forfeit the goodwill of the king. Charles, however, would not extend his favour for nothing and asked the Company to pay him £10,000 immediately; but the directors declared that they had no money and begged to be excused.

The negotiations that the king had begun with the Dutch were prolonged to an indefinite length and led to nothing. The Company saw that it had nothing at all to gain from the king. It began to devote its attention to the retention of such privileges as it had been already enjoying. It foresaw the shadow of the Civil War, reduced its expenditure, cut down the salaries of its servants in England, and tried to put down the private trade of its servants abroad.

Soon a rival Company (known as Courten's Association) was started with royal support. Its promoter, Weddell, was a servant of the Old Company. He drew up a series of charges against it in order that the king might be justified in annulling its monopoly. Charles granted a charter to Sir William Courten, who died soon afterwards, but the scheme was operated by Weddell in the name of Courten's son. The New Company sent a number of ships to India. Two of them committed open acts of piracy on the Red Sea and seized vessels belonging to the merchants of Diu and Surat, for which the Mughals held the Old Company's factors at Surat responsible and cast them into prison. Weddell himself sailed to Goa in 1636, used the English king's authority to get permission from the Portuguese viceroy there to trade where he chose, and returned home with a valuable cargo of silk and spices. Charles and his courtiers were overjoyed at this success of the New Company.

In spite of the protests of the Old Company the king issued a fresh charter to the New Company (June 1637) confirming its existing privileges and allowing it to trade, for a period of five years, with all

22 The memorial explained that the difficulties of the Company were mainly due to the failure of the spice trade and the inimical and oppressive attitude of the Dutch. The Company's ships carried 10,000 tons and gave employment to 2,500 sailors.

places in India where the Old Company had not established factories and also at Goa and Rajapur which lay midway between Bombay and Goa. But there were serious difficulties in the way of its continued competition with the Old Company. The Dutch showed small mercy to the ships of Courten's Association, and even Charles came to feel that he had more to gain from the large and wealthy body of London merchants who constituted the Old Company.

In 1639, after strenuous representation on the part of the Old Company, the king appointed a committee of the privy council to examine the whole matter of the India trade. Shortly afterwards, he declared that Courten and his fellow-adventurers should have a reasonable time to withdraw their settlements in India and wind up their affairs. He urged also that the Old Company should raise a fresh subscription, part of which he hoped to get for himself.

During the Civil War the Old Company displayed in all its actions only feebleness and indecision. In 1643 William Cockayne, a rich merchant of the Turkey Company and a sturdy supporter of Parliament, was chosen as the governor of the Company. He attempted to get parliamentary sanction for the Company through an Ordinance of Trade to be issued by Parliament which should practically confirm all the provisions of the previous royal charter (1646). The House of Commons was so far favourable to Cockayne's request that it gave Courten's Association three years' notice to withdraw from India. But the Lords rejected this proposal which consequently fell to the ground. The Company was much depressed at this failure and resolved to abolish seven of its Indian factories. It was at the end of its resources and could not raise any fresh subscription.

Courten's Association continued its activities, spoiling the Old Company's trade wherever it could even in Persia and the distant Philippine Islands. But its credit and reputation steadily declined, and it resorted to several wild schemes, which brought upon it the wrath of the Dutch and the Portuguese. In 1645 the Association formed a futile plan of establishing a colony at St Augustine's Bay in the island of Madagascar, in the fond hope that from that place it could injure the trade of its rivals. But bills were dishonoured by Indian merchants, and its agents were frequently thrown into goal for debts. It did not shrink even from the infamous trick of issuing counterfeit pagodas and other coins.

Governor Cockayne's prudence and tact were so far successful as to draw from Parliament in 1647 an acknowledgement of the Old Company's rights and of the importance of its trade to the realm. Despite the Company's loyalty to the crown throughout Charles's reign, the king in his distress openly violated its charter by granting

a licence to Courten's Association and maintaining a secret partnership with it. He also often impoverished the Company's finances by his demands for grants and loans. As Hunter says, "Charles's high pretensions and low expedients wearied out the Company, as they had wearied out the nation; and the Company's appeal to Parliament (1641 and 1646) was the commercial counterpart of the nation's appeal to the Sword."²³

In 1650 the Rump Parliament of the Commonwealth ordained that "the trade to the East Indies should be carried on by the Company and with one Joint-Stock and the management thereof should be under such regulations as the Parliament shall think fit". The Old Company was directed to unite itself with Courten's Association (known as the Assada Merchants from the plantation of Assada Isle), and the two were to form a united joint-stock, which should take over the factories in India and continue to trade for three years. But no subscriptions were forthcoming for this scheme, while the Assada Merchants could furnish very little to the joint-stock.

CROMWELL AND THE COMPANY

Between 1650 and 1652 the Company presented three petitions to Cromwell and the Council of State, praying for redress of grievances against the Dutch and submitting a statement of the losses suffered since the massacre of Amboyna which amounted to nearly two millions sterling besides interest. The Company declared that it wanted not only compensation from the Dutch, but complete authority for its servants to act freely in the East. When war actually broke out between Cromwell and the Dutch, the Company presented a petition praying for permission to take a direct part in the struggle, and even offered to send a fleet of armed ships to the East Indies.

Two articles of the treaty with the Dutch at the end of the war declared that the island of Pularoon (in the Spice Archipelago) should be restored to the English, and that the Dutch should pay large monetary compensations to the Company as also to the heirs of the Amboyna sufferers. Soon afterwards the Portuguese recognized the right of the English to reside and trade freely in all their possessions in the East. Thus the commercial convention which was concluded between the English Company in India and the Portuguese viceroy of Goa in 1634 was placed on a firm footing. Cromwell's interest in the Company was based on his approach to the question of India trade from the point of view of national interest.

Meanwhile the desire for open and unrestricted trade with India gained strength. The united joint-stock of the Company and the Assada Merchants was to expire in 1653, and it was hoped that after that date, the India trade would be organized by Cromwell on a broader basis. But the clamour for open trade grew louder, while a strong body of merchants within the Company's ranks prepared to fit out ships to carry out their own projects of independent trade. The latter styled themselves 'The New Adventurers' and were headed by one Maurice Thomson who afterwards became the governor of the Company. Governor Cockayne and the directors of the Company were depressed by the indecision of the Protector and sent two commissioners to the East with the object of reducing business in some factories and winding it up altogether in others. Thomson and the New Adventurers were confident that Cromwell would speedily revoke the Company's charter and that they themselves would get all the privileges which the 'King-made East India Company' had enjoyed for over half a century. Under a commission granted by Cromwell the New Adventurers sent out ships to Surat and the Coromandel coast in 1656.

At last a decision was reached by the Council of State and submitted to Cromwell for confirmation (February 1657). It was decided that the India trade should be carried on by one company on a united joint-stock basis. The Old Company was thus saved, at the last moment, from extinction; and it now felt that nothing was left to complete its recovery except a new charter from Cromwell on the lines of the previous ones. Its business was at a low ebb; several of its factories were dwindling. The Dutch had taken over its trade in Persia, and the New Adventurers and other private traders had contributed, by a general lowering of prices, to its further misery. The charter of Cromwell came late in 1657; and though no trace of the original document can now be found, its provisions are well-known. The Protector promised that, in the following year, his charter should be confirmed by an Act of Parliament; but unfortunately he died before the parliamentary sanction could be obtained. "His charter formed the last word of the Commonwealth on the three sets of proposals, which had so long divided English merchants, namely, for an open commerce to India, for a Regulated Company and for a Joint-Stock Company. He reconstituted the India trade on the basis of one Joint-Stock".

Cromwell's charter gave an entirely new form and life to the Company. The permanent 'joint-stock' that was created by the charter drew forth a large capital. This stock was not to be dissolved on the expiry of a few years as had been the case in previous subscriptions,

This new general stock lasted till 1709. Any shareholder who wished to retire might do so at the time of the triennial valuations which were to be made hereafter of the Company's properties; and his place might be taken up by any other person who wished to join the Company. The minimum subscription of a member was £100; the possession of £500 stock gave a member a vote at the general election, and a man having a larger stock had a vote for each £500 of his money. The possession of £1,000 stock enabled a member to stand for election as director. The affairs of the Company were to be managed, as before, by a governor, a deputy governor, a treasurer and a committee of 24 directors. The factories and other properties of the Company were taken over at a fixed valuation. The Company was now enabled to impose severe penalties on interlopers and confiscate their ships and cargoes, as well as to punish individual members from its own ranks who might dare to fit out 'separate voyages'. "There was to be no mercy for private traders, whether inside the Company or outside it, in the future."

As soon as the Company was granted the charter and reconstituted on a permanent basis, it set vigorously to improve its factories and trade. Madras (founded in 1640), which had been recently assailed by interlopers, was revived. All the factories on the Coromandel coast, in Bengal, in the Persian Gulf and at Bantam were subjected to the control of Surat; and regular factories, well supplied with goods and money, were established in the various settlements. It seemed as if "from the charter of 1657 the Company drew a new life whose pulsation reached its farthest factories in Asia".

POLICY OF CHARLES II

When the monarchy was restored (1660) the directors were at first afraid that, having enjoyed the favour of Cromwell, they might not be liked by Charles II; but the new king did not bear any malice against them for having sought Cromwell's support. He was not blind to the advantages which he might derive from the Company; and within a year after his accession, he granted it a charter identical in its provisions with that of James I. The outburst of loyalty which characterized the English nation in 1660 made itself felt even in the court of the East India Company, so much so that almost all the directors became more and more royalists in sentiment and action. King Charles, on his part, continued throughout his reign to be kind and sympathetic to the Company. Under him the Company greatly developed its territorial settlements in India, and for the government of these settlements he granted it new and large powers.

He consistently and faithfully supported the Company against the interlopers, against the rising clamour of the nation for free trade with India, against the Portuguese and the Dutch, and against its own mutinous servants like Winter and Keigwin who raised a rebellion at Bombay.

Apart from territorial acquisitions the Restoration also benefited the Company's trade. The days of strict Puritanism, when the general use of spices, silks and other eastern luxuries was prohibited, were now over. Silks and ornaments were once more in fashion and pepper and spices again appeared at table. Those who belittled the commerce of the East India Company were effectually silenced, and everywhere the benefits accruing to the nation from the Indian trade were spoken of highly. A book of Sir Thomas Mun, one of the champions of the East India trade, which was not published in the stern days of Cromwell's ascendancy, now boldly proclaimed to the nation as follows: "Behold then, the true form and the worth of foreign trade, which is the great revenue of the King, the honour of the Kingdom; the noble profession of the merchant, the school of our ports; the supply of our wants; the employment of our mariners; the walls of the kingdom; the means of our treasure; the sinews of our wars; the terror of our enemies."

Charles II, like his father and grandfather, was always in need of money; and the Company had to pay frequently and heavily in return for his favours. During the first eighteen years of his reign the Company paid the king nearly two millions sterling in cash. In 1663 it handed over to his younger brother, the Duke of York (afterwards James II), all its privileges of trade with West Africa as well as its factories and settlements on the Guinea coast. But in return the Company received from the king no less than five renewals of its charter, possession of the islands of Bombay and St Helena, and sustained and consistent support against the interlopers and the Dutch. His partiality for an alliance with the French and his hatred of the Dutch led him to take up seriously the Company's grievances against the latter. It was convenient for him to find in those grievances a *causus belli* for his two wars against Holland. But although the Company advanced large sums of money to the king for these wars, its interests were not served. Though peace was concluded in 1674 the Company's resentment against the Dutch did not abate.

During all these years the Company's trade became prosperous. Its permanent 'joint-stock' capital, formed at the time of Cromwell's charter (1657), had so increased in value that £100 stock sold at £360 to £500 in 1682-83. The profits that were paid to the shareholders amounted to nearly 25 per cent per annum, while in addition frequent

bonuses were also declared. In 1682 they practically received back their entire original subscription as a special bonus. The original 'joint-stock' capital was not increased; what additional sums of money the Company required for purposes of trade were borrowed from outside at low rates of interest. The effect was that all the profits were monopolized by the original shareholders or their successors.

THE ENGLISH AT MADRAS

In India the acquisition of Madras and Bombay marked important stages in the development of the Company's trading activities. Even before the English, the Dutch had planted a settlement at Pulicat, about 24 miles north of Madras, whose extensive backwater, the Pulicat Lake, afforded safe shelter for the shipping of those days. They had also a factory at Masulipatam. In 1611, and again in 1614, the English attempted a landing at Pulicat, but in vain, as Dutch jealousy went a long way in hampering their trade. It was only in 1620 that the English were permitted to trade at all at that place. But the rivalry and hostility of the Dutch which had flamed up on the eve of the Amboyna tragedy made it impossible for the English to continue for long at Pulicat, which had to be abandoned by them in 1623. Thus the first English attempt at a settlement on the Madras coast ended in failure.

Nor was their effort to establish a second settlement any more successful. In 1614 a factory was built at Pettapoli (modern Nizampatam) at the mouth of a small channel of the Krishna delta, then under the rule of the sultan of Golconda; it was also fortified. But the mangrove swamps that surrounded the place were deadly to the health of the English factors. After a few years of hopeless struggle the factory was abandoned (1621).

Masulipatam was better protected from the violence of the monsoon than the two former places, though it was liable to be swept from time to time by huge tidal waves. It was the chief port for the export of diamonds and rubies for which Golconda was very famous, as also valuable chintz cloths. The eagerly sought-for diamonds, silks, calico cloth and salt-petre were all there ready for sale.

In 1611 the English first landed at the place, and two years later they succeeded in obtaining the permission of the local governor for the erection of a fortified factory. At first things appeared promising, but soon they got wrong on account of the rivalry of the Dutch. The Dutch ingratiated themselves into the favour of the local governor, misrepresented all the doings of the English, and in a few

years rendered their position insufferable. In 1628 the English in despair abandoned their factory and declared that they would never return to Masulipatam except under a direct grant from the sultan of Golconda, which would be effective against the local ruler.

It was only two years later—in 1630—that the English returned to Masulipatam which was then desolated and impoverished by famine and plague. In 1632 they obtained the long-coveted permission from the sultan of Golconda, the golden *Farman*, with which commenced the era of safety and prosperity for English trade. Though their Masulipatam factory suffered from the establishment of Madras in 1639-40, it retained its importance and its trade continued to be considerable.

When the English abandoned Masulipatam in despair in 1628, they took shelter at Arumugam, situated about 40 miles to the north of Pulicat. The place was, however, too poor to serve as a centre of trade, and most of the merchants who went there soon deserted it, some for Masulipatam, and others for the factory which was established at Madras shortly afterwards. Arumugam is important only because it was the first site which was territorially acquired by the English and on which a fort was built²⁴.

The directors, dissatisfied with the state of affairs of the English at Masulipatam and at Arumugam, ordered Francis Day, one of the members of the council of Masulipatam, to seek for some place where trade might be carried on under more favourable conditions. Day had to find out a place which would satisfy all the requirements of a good factory, viz. a good anchorage for ships, some natural protection from the bands of predatory horsemen of the interior, the nearness of good markets for the exchange of commodities and an easy inland communication with the most important districts. He went south beyond the Dutch settlement of Pulicat, and turned his attention to San Thome, near Mylapore, which was one of the largest of the Portuguese colonies on the Coromandel coast. The Indo-Portuguese inhabitants of San Thome welcomed Day warmly, and the latter could have rented the place from the Portuguese, had he been so inclined. It had a strong fort which only needed some repairs. It was full of Portuguese and Indian merchants who would be good interpreters and middlemen between the English traders and the Hindus. But Day chose a narrow strip of land lying three miles to the north of San Thome, where he thought that the English could live with greater freedom and security and maintain themselves with a smaller force than what would be necessary if they were to prefer

²⁴ See C. S. Srinivasachari, *History of the City of Madras*, 2, 3.

San Thome. He obtained from the local nayak, Damarla Venkatappa, the chief of Wandiwash, who governed the entire coast from Pulicat to San Thome, under the raja of Chandragiri, a grant of territory and permission to build a fort and form a settlement there (2 August 1639)²⁵. The annual rental was £600.

The piece of land thus secured was six miles long and a mile broad and had apparently nothing to commend it as a place for any effective settlement. But neither the sandy wastes which surrounded it, nor the hopelessly foul odour springing up from the Cooum river by its side which was unfit for navigation on account of its shallowness and unsuitable for irrigation as its water was brackish, deterred the indomitable will of Francis Day. His one single object was to secure a place for the English which they might call their own, whatever its disadvantages might be. He knew that even the worst natural disadvantages could be overcome by human efforts.

Without waiting for permission from England, Day began the building of a fort, and named it Fort St George, probably because part of it was finished by St George's Day, 1640. The attitude of the directors was very discouraging and they passed repeated censures upon Day and his fellow-worker, Cogan, who had been sent from Surat to take charge of the English factories in the east coast, and who became the first agent at Madras (February 1640). The English merchants at Surat and Bantam, however, realized the advantages of a halfway house for trade with the Archipelago; and they were convinced that Fort St George was conveniently situated and might serve many good purposes. Day went to England in 1641 to plead personally for his settlement before the court of directors; while Cogan suffered much before he was excused from all blame and responsibility for the charge of building the fort. The directors, ignorant of the conditions of trade in the East, continued to hold till 1647 that the building of Fort St George was a very indiscreet act.²⁶

The settlement was at first governed from Bantam, and its trade consisted chiefly of Indian calicos and muslins which were needed for the Bantam market. Day returned to Madras and stayed there until 1644 when he sailed for England. After his departure trade languished; the merchants remained idle and disheartened. England was then distracted by the Civil War. Anarchy prevailed in Karnatak.

²⁵ For a discussion as to the date of the grant see C. S. Srinivasachari, *History of the City of Madras*, 5-6. Damarla Venkatappa is mentioned in English records as "the Lord General of Carnatica" and "Grand Vizir to the King". Ayyappa, his younger brother, was in subordinate control of the country round Madras and made, perhaps, the first overtures to Day. (See W. Foster, *The Founding of Fort St George*).

²⁶ See Love, *Vestiges of Old Madras*, I, 58.

The raja of Chandragiri, Venkatapathi Raya, a descendant of the old Vijayanagar kings, from one of whose feudatories Day got the grant for Madras, had died in 1642 and his successor Sriranga Raya was involved in hostilities. By 1647 the sultan of Golconda had become the master of all the country round Madras, and the English hastened to make friends with him and secured the privileges which they were enjoying.

In 1652 Madras was raised to the rank of a presidency and made independent of Bantam; Aaron Baker arrived from Bantam as its first president. He saw that if he had a free hand and had command of men and money he might quickly push forward the advantages which Madras offered. But before anything important could be effected, the directors suddenly ordered the reduction of Madras to the status of a subordinate agency, reduced its garrison and cut down its staff of merchants to two (1654). It was not until 1658 that Madras was again restored to the rank of a presidency, independent of Bantam and directly responsible to the court of directors for its actions, while all the factories in Bengal and on the Coromandel coast were subordinated to it. "Thenceforward, Madras stood as the type of the system of fortified factories; which the conflicts of the native powers in south-eastern India rendered indispensable for the safety of European trade."

With the Restoration in England (1660) Madras entered on a new period of life. But at first its trade was in disarray and there was serious trouble from interlopers and the Company's servants who traded privately on their own account. Sir Edward Winter, who had been for some years in the Company's service, was appointed president of Madras in 1662 and given summary powers to punish all who engaged in private trade and to send them back to England. The factories in Bengal and on the Coromandel coast were all placed under his immediate superintendence. He held the reins of government until 1665 by right, and from 1665 to 1668 by usurpation. He improved the sea trade with Bengal and Bantam, and threatened the Indian powers with retaliation on the sea for the injuries that they might inflict on the English on land. He believed that it was only by such strong measures and fortified factories that English trade could be made secure and prosperous. A local naik had significantly remarked that "when the English horns and teeth grew, then he could free them from the duties". Winter strove to build up the English horns and teeth. Then followed his recall (due primarily to the resentment of the Company's servants whose private trade he autocratically suppressed) and usurpation of power from his successor, George Foxcroft. Foxcroft was arrested and kept in confinement

for three years, during which Winter continued to rule Madras 'with a wisdom and judgment which filled the coffers of the Company'. He was then released and allowed to hold office for one year, but Winter was treated with respect and exonerated from all blame.

Sir William Langhorne, the next governor, arrived at Madras in 1660 and continued in office till 1678. In his time Madras was fairly prosperous. The French, however, established themselves in strong force at San Thome, while the Dutch advanced threateningly from their station at Pulicat on the north. Longhorne pushed on the fortifications of the settlement to great strength and efficiency. Dr John Fryer, a surgeon in the Company's service, who visited the town in 1673, says that it contained some *choultries*; a large market-place and a pagoda surrounded by a stone wall; there were about 300 English inhabitants²⁷.

Longhorne's tenure of the governorship was an exciting one for the settlement. The neighbouring town of San Thome was originally a Portuguese possession. Threatened by the Dutch and besieged by the forces of Golconda, it had succumbed to the latter power in 1662, when the French, who had formed a company for eastern trade a few years before, took it. But no sooner had they entered into its possession, than they were closely besieged by the combined forces of the Dutch (with whom France was then at war) and the sultan of Golconda. In 1674 the town submitted to the sultan. Langhorne, who was anxious that no European power should occupy a place so near Madras, urged on the sultan the demolition of its fort.

Langhorne fell a victim to the charge of private trade brought against him; he was recalled. A strong man, Strevnsham Master, became governor and ruled till 1681. Master had been a servant of the Company since 1660. He had distinguished himself at Surat in 1664 by his courageous defence of the English factory against Shivaji. He was a strong-willed man and a masterful personality. His first act as governor was to frame regulations for the proper administration of justice and the conduct of the civil servants. He next proceeded to put the fort in order, since there was a rumour that Sivaji who had already come near Conjeeveram would appear before the settlement. Fortunately for the English, Shivaji did not care to attack Madras; he merely asked Master to send him some cordials and medicines and kept quiet. After this Master strengthened and partially

27 He also left a good description of Bombay which he visited after Madras. See W. Crooke, *A New Account of East India and Persia* (Hakluyt Society, Second Series, vols. XIX, XX, XXXIX).

Thomas Bowrey came to Madras in 1669 and left a brief account of the place. See Sir Richard Temple, *The Countries Round the Bay of Bengal* (Hakluyt Society).

rebuilt the fort. He visited the various subordinate factories in the Bay of Bengal, settled disputes, and introduced a new method of keeping books and accounts in those places. Master may very well be called the second founder of Madras. He was, however, too independent in mind and action to be liked by the imperious Sir Josia Child who was then the moving spirit among the directors²⁸.

Master's successor, Gyfford, was weak and shifty. The trouble from the interlopers increased. The governor bribed and threatened them alternately, but this halting policy was of no use at all. The interlopers multiplied and flourished, and among them was "Pirate" Thomas Pitt who subsequently became governor of Madras. The Dutch and English pirates formed another serious source of trouble to Gyfford. The only advance made by the English under Gyfford was the securing of permission from the Marathas, who held the country round the strong fortress of Jinji, to settle and trade at Porto Novo and Cuddalore (1682). Towards the close of Gyfford's rule Madras was in danger of being attacked by Aurangzib who was then warring in the Golconda country.

In the time of Elihu Yale, the next governor (1686-92), the fortunes of the English worsened. In 1687 the fortress of Golconda fell after a prolonged siege into Mughal hands. Soon afterwards a Mughal army occupied the country as far south as Conjeeveram, but fortunately there was no Mughal attack on Madras. The rash action of Sir John Child, governor of Bombay, in declaring war against the Mughals and the disgraceful failure of the English expedition to Bengal against the Mughal viceroy, resulted in the evacuation of the English factories at Hughli, Vizagapatam, Masulipatam and other places in the north. Job Charnock, the founder of Calcutta, who had been driven out of Bengal, arrived at Madras with the survivors of his garrison in 1689. A Mughal attack on Madras remained imminent for several months, but again the storm blew over. In 1690 the Mughals at last made peace, and Zulfiqar Khan, the Mughal general in the Jinji country, confirmed the privileges of the English at Madras and other places. The English had also purchased the Fort of Tegnapatam (Fort St David) near Cuddalore from Ram Raja, the second son of Shivaji, who was then ruling at Jinji.

Under Yale Madras got a corporation with a mayor and aldermen. The scheme of starting a corporation for Madras had originated with Sir Josia Child who thought that, if influential leaders of the locality were made aldermen and members of the corporation, they would easily persuade the people to pay taxes. The mayor and aldermen

²⁸ See Sir Richard Temple, *Diaries of Streynsham Master* (Indian Records Series).

were to form a court for the trial of civil and criminal cases. But though the corporation was formed with a flourish of trumpets, taxes were not easily collected from the inhabitants and the people strongly resisted anything like the imposition of a house-tax²⁹.

From Yale's time, until 1746, when the French under La Bourdonnais captured Madras, all the governors were merchant-princes who had two definite objects in view, *viz.* the advancement of the Company's trade and the accumulation of a private fortune for themselves. The directors no longer grumbled or grew angry at their servants' private trade; they learnt that the latter could grow wealthy by private trading and could yet advance the Company's interest.

The most famous of these merchant-governors was Thomas Pitt, the interloper, "Pirate Pitt" as he was called, whom the directors described as "a desperate fellow, and one that, we fear, will not stick at doing any mischief that lies in his power". Knowing that he was irrepressible the directors resolved to come to terms with him, and appointed him governor of Madras in 1698. He was governor for the unusually long term of eleven years from 1698-1709; and his term of office proved to be 'the golden age of Madras in respect of the development of trade and increase of wealth'. The successful resistance to the attack of Daud Khan, the Mughal ruler of Karnatak; the permanent fortification of the Black Town; the acquisition of numerous villages in the vicinity of Madras; the firm control of the so-called "Right-Hand" and "Left-Hand" castes of the Black Town which frequently quarrelled and came to blows: these are the chief events of his governorship. But his most important service was his defence of the Company and protection of its interests against the New Company that was formed in 1698, and its representatives³⁰.

THE ENGLISH AT BOMBAY

For many years before the Restoration the English had been anxious to get possession of Bombay from the Portuguese. Its situation about the middle of the western coast enabled its possessors to control the entire coastal trade of that region and to threaten the Portuguese and the Dutch in the neighbourhood. Moreover, unlike Surat, it lay outside the limits of the Mughal empire and could be easily fortified and defended against enemies without the necessity of Mughal permis-

²⁹ See Child's General Letter to Madras, 28 September 1687, for the scheme of the corporation, and also Fort St George Consultations (13 and 29 September 1688).

³⁰ See Sir Cornelius Neale Dalton, *The Life of Thomas Pitt*; Sir Henry Yule, *Documentary Contributions to a Biography of Thomas Pitt* (vol. III: *Diary of William Hedges*, Hakluyt Society).

sion. As early as 1626 the English and the Dutch advanced from Surat and seized Bombay; but they could not retain possession of the place for long. In 1653 the English merchants of Surat again brought the subject to the notice of the directors and pointed out that the island of Bombay might be made a convenient fortified station which might at the same time be well defended from attacks; and they added that the Portuguese could allow them, in return for a consideration, to take possession of the place as well as the neighbouring island of Bassein. Next year the directors drew the attention of the Lord Protector, Cromwell, to this suggestion. It was, therefore, only as the satisfaction of a long-expressed wish that, in 1661, the Portuguese gave Bombay as part of the dowry of their princess, Catherine of Braganza, on her marriage with Charles II. In return Charles had to guarantee to the Portuguese all their possessions in the East and to attempt to bring about a friendly arrangement between them and the Dutch. The importance of Bombay was little grasped by the English at home at that time, and even its very situation was not clearly known to many, as can be seen from the *Memoirs* of the Lord Chancellor, the Earl of Clarendon, who wrote that the island of Bombay was 'within a very little distance from Brazil'. Even the Portuguese, who were far more familiar than the English with the geography of India and her coast, were not in a position to appreciate its importance till it was ceded by them to Charles II.

In September 1662 an English fleet of five ships arrived in Bombay harbour in order to take possession of the place. But the Portuguese who had by now recognized the value of the island were not willing to give it up; and they easily found an excuse for their refusal in the demands which the English now made. The English asserted, and the Portuguese denied, that the neighbouring island of Salsette was included in the treaty of cession and the latter refused to listen to the English claims at all. The fleet thereupon departed for England, leaving 400 soldiers under General Shipman, who, finding the president of the English Company at Surat unwilling to provide shelter for his soldiers, was compelled to lead a life of great privation and distress in the unhealthy island of Anjidiva situated at some distance south of Goa. There, during the ensuing rainy season, the general as well as 300 of his men perished from privation and distress. This was the first instalment of the price that had to be paid by the English for the acquisition of Bombay, 'a sacrifice which then seemed too great for the object to be gained'³¹.

³¹ See Malabari, *Bombay in the Making*. See also S. A. Khan, *Anglo-Portuguese Negotiations relating to Bombay, 1660-77*.

Humphrey Cooke, who succeeded to Shipman's command, was tossed about from place to place for want of proper shelter for himself and his men, and was only too glad to accept any terms that the Portuguese offered. He readily accepted the cession of merely the port and harbour of Bombay which was now offered by the Portuguese. The British government was dissatisfied with Cooke's action and demanded of the Portuguese satisfaction for damages. The English were by no means charmed with their new possession, as the Portuguese, entrenched in the island of Salsette and other places in the neighbourhood, levied fines and imposts on English boats and otherwise harassed English traders and soldiers. For all this poor Cooke was blamed, though the course that he adopted then was the only possible one in the miserable position in which he was placed. Sir Gervase Lucas, a staunch royalist, was appointed to succeed Cooke in 1666; but he was not more successful. He quarrelled with the Company's factors at Surat and died within a few months after he had landed at Bombay. His successor, Captain Gray, was proud, wasteful, extravagant and disputatious³².

Sir George Oxenden, a man of high character and spotless reputation, was appointed by the Company in 1662 as its president at Surat with specific instructions to root out private trade and interloping. From the very beginning Oxenden looked on the king's governors at Bombay with very great jealousy: and he did not even give shelter to Shipman and his miserable troops. In 1664 news reached him that the French were fitting out eight armed vessels, under a Dutch pirate, for the East and that he must look to the safety of his settlement and trade. Soon afterwards a new danger developed: Shivaji appeared with his army before Surat. The Mughal governor of the place shut himself up in his castle; the inhabitants fled and the English factory was placed in a state of siege. The conduct of the English was so gallant that they not only held their own but also saved the property of many of the Indian merchants. It has been said that "the first spark of England's military glory in India was kindled when the peace-loving Company of British traders nobly defended Surat against the founder of the Mahratta power". Aurangzib appreciated the courage and resoluteness of the English, warmly conveyed his gratitude to them, granted them exemption from customs duties for a year, and sent Oxenden a robe of honour.

Despite the services of the English during the sack of Surat the Mughals were jealous of the English possession of Bombay which was so near Surat, their most important sea-port. They held Oxenden, the

32 See Anderson, *The English in Western India*, 55.

Company's president at Surat, responsible for all the acts of the king's governors at Bombay. Both were English, both acknowledged one monarch; and yet the English at Surat and the English at Bombay claimed distinct and separate powers. This sounded strange to the Mughal officers. In 1667 they demanded from Oxenden the services of English engineers and artillerymen for their army. Oxenden was not on good terms with the king's governor at Bombay; he could not borrow soldiers from that place even for the defence of his own factory, when the Mughals had withdrawn their garrison from Surat, much less for services in the Mughal army.

It was in such a situation that Charles II made up his mind to get Bombay off his hands. He was sure it was coveted by the Company, though the latter pretended that the possession of the place would only entail on it great difficulty and expense. A royal charter was issued by which the island was transferred to the Company in return for an annual rent of £10. Oxenden received possession of the island in September 1668 in the name of the Company.

Oxenden was a man of considerable ability and high character. During the Dutch War of 1665-67 he faced the Dutch who threatened the English possessions on the west coast with the same courage with which he had encountered Shivaji at Surat. From him Bombay might be said to have got its first impetus to growth. He strengthened the fortifications of the island and perceived with a farseeing vision, even when no Suez Canal was looming in the distance, that Bombay was destined from its geographical position to become the key to India from the West. He garrisoned the island with troops brought from Madras and Bantam and strove to enlarge its trade. In 1669 he came in person to Bombay and set on foot an efficient system of civil and military administration; and his regulations were adopted as the model for all the military establishments of the Company. His death at Surat, soon after his return from Bombay, in July 1669 was a serious loss to the Company.

Gerald Aungier, who succeeded Oxenden, was president of Surat and governor of Bombay from 1669 to 1677. He was the true founder of Bombay's greatness. He resolved to make Bombay completely safe for shipping and trade, free from danger on the land side from the Marathas and on the sea side from the Portuguese and the pirates of the coast. He fortified the citadel, constructed a dock, laid out a town, established a court of justice which was open for all litigants, created a police force and a militia, and started a mint which coined both silver and copper money. Under Aungier Bombay became a safe asylum for all merchants and manufacturers. He established vigorous and strict discipline over all the inhabitants of the city and allowed

every community to enjoy the free exercise of its religion without molestation. During his governorship the old *panchayat* system was revived, so that justice was actually brought to the door of the people in minor causes. He saved English lives and properties during Shivaji's second sack of Surat in 1670. He boldly faced threatened attacks from the Dutch and the Portuguese. He had to propitiate both the Mughals and the Marathas³³.

Under Aungier Bombay became the best naval station on the Indian coast and a harbour of refuge from the Marathas and the Malabar pirates. Its population rose to 60,000 and its revenue increased three-fold. Aungier had schemes for improving all the western factories of the Company, for organizing the Indian merchants into guilds, and for draining the tidal swamps in the neighbourhood of Bombay and improving its health. He died in 1677 at Surat. His council wrote: "Multiplicity of words may multiply the sense of our loss, but cannot depict his greatness."

During the period of the governorship (1677-82) of Rolt, Aungier's successor, Bombay's very existence as an English settlement hung in the balance, while the islands in its neighbourhood were occupied by the Mughals or the Marathas. The directors retrenched expenditure they reduced the garrison of Bombay, its trade and its power. Dr John Frer, who was for nine years in India and Persia (1672-81), and who visited various places on the Coromandel and Malabar coasts, wrote bitterly about the low state into which English reputation had fallen at that time.

In 1682 Sir John Child, brother of the famous Sir Josia Child, who then wielded great influence among the directors, was appointed to the presidency of Bombay and Surat. He was the first governor to have jurisdiction over all the Company's possessions and to be vested with discretionary powers to make war or peace with the Mughals. He was directed to seize the goods and vessels of the kings of Siam and Bantam. He was a resourceful and enterprising administrator, though unscrupulous, haughty and vindictive. From his time began the general decline of Bombay which continued till the close of the first quarter of the eighteenth century. The peaceful and orderly government of Aungier was a striking contrast to the terror which prevailed under Sir John Child.

During Child's governorship (1682-90) three serious and unforeseen difficulties cropped up, viz. the military revolt at Bombay under Keigwin (1683-84); increasing troubles from interlopers and pirates; and the determination of the directors to ignore the authority of the

³³ See Douglas, *Bombay and Western India*, I, 76.

Mughal emperor and launch upon a career of territorial dominion which only resulted in bitter defeat and humiliation.

Keigwin, a former governor of St Helena, was at the time of the revolt the captain of the garrison at Bombay. He captured the deputy governor, got himself proclaimed as governor and issued a proclamation in the name of the king. He surrendered in November 1684 to a fleet sent by the king. Though a mutineer, he avoided bloodshed and showed considerable administrative skill during his brief tenure of power.

The charter which Charles II granted to the Company in 1661 gave it power to seize all interlopers and send them in custody to England. One Thomas Skinner, an interloper of the Commonwealth period, was sternly punished by the Company which confiscated his ship, factory and merchandise and even denied him a passage to England in one of its own vessels. Skinner, obliged to travel overland all the way to England, bitterly complained against the Company both to the king and Parliament. But neither the king nor the House of Commons would interfere and poor Skinner was left without redress, while the Company came out triumphantly. In spite of this, interloping grew on a large scale. Aungier took stern measures against the interlopers, but not to much purpose. Child was no believer in half-measures; he resolved to crush them completely and issued strict orders in 1682 to seize all interlopers and to confiscate their ships and cargoes. He even determined to treat interlopers as pirates and punish them as such.

The interlopers plundered Indian ships. The number of English pirates in the Indian waters grew. They came chiefly from the American colonies and their ships, though nominally fitted out for slave trade with Africa, were really used for piracy in the Indian seas. After the celebrated case of Sandys, a notorious interloper who challenged unsuccessfully, in the English courts, the king's prerogative to grant exclusive trade privileges to the Company, the directors became bolder in their repression of interloping. The interlopers, now driven into a corner, took to open piracy and snapped their fingers at both king and Company.

In 1686 two pirate ships captured several Mughal vessels in the Red Sea. The Mughal governor of Surat became violently incensed at Sir John Child. Soon the Mughals visited on the Company all their wrath at the depredations of the English pirates, placed a guard over the Company's factory at Surat and laid an embargo on its trade. Though Child punished the interlopers savagely whenever they were caught, the evil grew more rampant. These pirates and interlopers

were the principal cause of the disastrous war which the English subsequently waged with the Mughals.

In 1686 the directors resolved to meet Mughal oppression by force, as matters had come to a head both in Bengal and in Bombay. An expedition of ten ships was fitted out from England against Bengal, but the attempt ended in utter failure. Sir John Child remained inactive for a year in the hope of avoiding hostilities. But in May 1687 he sent two ships to capture all Mughal vessels in the Red Sea, whereupon the Mughal governor of Surat imprisoned Child's representative at that place and confiscated all English goods there. He even offered a large reward to anyone who would capture Child, dead or alive. Child got really frightened and hastened to assure the emperor Aurangzib who was then in the Deccan that he had really no hostile intentions. But Aurangzib was not deceived by Child's profession of friendship; he issued orders that the English should be treated as enemies and that the Abyssinian Sidis in his service should blockade and capture Bombay. The English prisoners at Surat were very badly treated. At last Child supplicated the emperor for peace, whereupon the latter imposed the following humiliating terms upon the English : (1) All sums due from the Company to the Mughal subjects should be immediately paid; (2) recompence should be given for such losses as the Mughals had suffered, and (3) the hated Sir John Child should leave India within nine months.

After Child there followed several weak governors of whom Sir John Gayer alone may be remembered. Gayer, who took office in 1695, had a serious dispute with the Mughal governor of Surat over some English pirates who had plundered an Indian vessel. In his time the New or English Company was founded in rivalry to the Old Company (now known as the London Company). The New Company sent out one Sir Nicholas Waite to Surat as its own representative. Waite cunningly told the Mughal officers that Gayer and other servants of the Old Company were in league with the interlopers and that they had a hand in the piracies which were being committed in and around the Surat seas. Gayer was imprisoned by the Mughals, it was said, at the actual instigation of Waite, and he was not released even after Aurangzib's death. Thus the old rivalry between the Company's president at Surat and the king's governor of Bombay was revived in another shape, and a series of petty squabbles kept the two Companies in bitter and ruinous rivalry.

The distressing events of the governorships of Child and Gayer had a disastrous effect on the prosperity of Bombay. The revolt of Keigwin, the depredations of the interlopers, the ruinous war with the Mughals which Child provoked, and the bitter rivalry of the two Com-

panies and their servants: all these seriously affected the growth of the population and prosperity of Bombay and brought matters to a chaotic condition. The favourite city of Aungier fell upon evil days. There was plenty of crime, iminorality and disease in the city. There was no control over the factors, nor any over their masters; and it became the fashion for the English to be vicious and reckless as contemporary writers abundantly testify.

EARLY ENGLISH SETTLEMENTS IN BENGAL

The early history of the English settlements in Bengal easily falls into several well-marked stages. Between the years 1633 and 1663 the English factories in Bengal aimed at nothing more than peaceful trade under the protection of the Mughal power. In the next stage, 1663-85, the English merchants in Bengal were hampered by 'quarrels with native powers, by quarrels with interloping rivals, and by quarrels among themselves'. After 1685, when they had come to despair in respect of maintaining their trade by peaceful means and by treaties with the Indian powers, they resolved to protect themselves by force and entered into open war with the Mughal power. During the years 1685 to 1690 "the English in Bengal were in a state of flux"; they were several times defeated and driven out of Hughli and other settlements. At last in 1690 they returned to Bengal at the invitation of the Mughal viceroy and formed a fortified settlement at Calcutta. It was in the fourth period which begins from 1690 that the settlement took a definite shape³⁴.

In 1633 the English agent at Masulipatam found that he could not get a sufficient quantity of cloth and other articles of trade with Bengal and Orissa. The Mughal governor of Orissa gave the English merchants permission to establish factories at Hariharpur (near the mouth of the Mahanadi) and at Balasore further north. The English intended to establish additional factories at Jagannath-Puri and at Pipili³⁵ to the north of Balasore, but could not do so. They had to meet the opposition of the Portuguese pirates, who possessed several strongholds on the broken sea-coast of Arakan and Chittagong. Moreover, a Dutch fleet sailed up and down the coast of Orissa and gave them the greatest possible amount of trouble. The factory at Hariharpur soon fell into decay, as its river where ships used to lie rapidly silted up; and all that remained to the English in 1640 was

³⁴ See Wilson, *Early Annals of the English in Bengal*, I, 8.

³⁵ There is reason to believe that in 1634 the English at Surat received an imperial farman permitting them to trade in Bengal but restricting their ships to the port of Pipili. (Firminger, *Introduction to the Fifth Report*, I, iii).

their settlement at Balasore which was very unhealthy. In 1641 the English were so depressed that they resolved to wind up their Orissa factories. But Francis Day, the founder of Madras, who came to Balasore on a visit of inspection in 1642, perceived the commercial advantages of Balasore and strongly urged the directors that the factory should be retained and improved. Day's companions had, however, little faith in his judgement; they resolved to keep up the Balasore settlement for the time being, but wrote to the directors for a final decision.

One Gabriel Boughton, an English surgeon sent from Surat to Agra, acquired by his medical skill great influence at the Mughal court (1645). He became a favourite of prince Shah Shuja, second son of the emperor and viceroy of Bengal, and was in fact residing with the latter at Rajmahal. The English resolved to take advantage of this circumstance to establish a factory in the interior of Bengal and to trade in saltpetre, silk and sugar which were the chief commodities available there. Two English merchants were sent forth in 1651 to start a new factory at the Mughal town of Hughli. Gabriel Boughton used his influence with prince Shuja to get for the English permission to trade throughout Bengal free from customs and other dues. The factors at Hughli, however, proved to be corrupt, and what with the competition of the Dutch and the depression of trade on the Coromandel coast, the English once more resolved to withdraw from Bengal and Orissa and to close their factories at Hughli and Balasore (1657). But just then a fresh life was infused into the Company by Cromwell's charter. Its Indian settlements were reorganized; and besides the presidency of Surat there was to be four chief agencies at Madras, Hughli and Bantam and in Persia. In Bengal there were to be subordinate agencies at Balasore, Qasimbazar and Patna in addition to the chief agency at Hughli.

Once again, however, there was to be a setback for the English. The war of succession in the Mughal empire, which broke out when Shah Jahan fell seriously ill, removed Shuja from the scene and finally raised Aurangzib to the throne (1658). Mir Jumla, one of Aurangzib's most trusted lieutenants, was appointed viceroy of Bengal. During his rule the English trade suffered badly. The subordinate Mughal governors of Hughli and Balasore levied exorbitant charges on the English traders, and all their boats, as they came down the Ganges laden with saltpetre, were stopped by the order of the viceroy. At last the English lost all patience and seized, as a retaliatory measure, a vessel belonging to an Indian merchant. Mir Jumla became very angry and threatened that he would destroy all the out agencies of the English, seize their factory at Hughli, and expel them

altogether from the country. The English humbly apologized and were left in peace for the time. In 1663 Mir Jumla died and was succeeded in the Bengal viceroyalty by Shayista Khan.

In England there was a growing demand for Bengal goods, especially for silk and saltpetre; and the trade of the Bengal factories consequently increased. In 1667 Aurangzib gave the English a *farman* for trade in Bengal, and five years later, in 1672, the viceroy, Shayista Khan, issued an order confirming all the privileges already acquired by the English. Even before this date Shayista Khan had extirpated the numerous river- and sea-pirates of Chittagong and Arakan who had for more than a century infested the whole of the Bay of Bengal. In this time the French and the Danes commenced their commercial activities in Bengal. But he did not take any measures at all to check the oppressive proceedings and exactions of his local officers, and the foreign merchants had to rely on their goodwill. For some time all went on well.

Streynsham Master, who had already rendered good service to the Company in western India and who was to do still better service as governor of Madras, was sent out as special commissioner in 1676 in order to introduce a better system of management and account-keeping in the Bengal factories. Master visited the three important settlements at Hughli, Qasimbazar and Balasore as well as the subordinate factories at Patna, Rajmahal and Dacca. He again inspected all these factories some years later when he was governor of Madras. On both occasions his visit was marked by the introduction of substantial improvements. He found that the English factors and apprentices were quarrelsome, insubordinate, avaricious and negligent of their duties, and he took severe measures to correct them. The old viceroy Shayista Khan called the English in Bengal 'a company of base, quarrelling people and foul dealers'. From Streynsham Master the directors learnt two lessons: that the trade of Bengal was of the greatest importance and that the control of the Bengal factories was extremely difficult.

In 1681 the directors appointed William Hedges, one of their own number, to the agency of Hughli, which was thenceforth to be distinct and separate from Madras. He was strictly enjoined to correct all abuses prevailing in the Bengal factories and to put down the interlopers with a strong hand. Hedges found it an extremely difficult task as the interlopers came in greater numbers than ever, and won over the governor of Hughli and other Mughal officials to their side. He found the general trade of the Company in a very low state; and soon he came to blows with the Mughal customs-collector of Hughli, and escaped by night from his vengeance. He laid bare his grievan-

ces before Shayista Khan himself. The viceroy promised to improve matters, but the old oppressions went on as before. Hedges's diary deals largely with the affairs of the English in Bengal³⁶.

Hedges came to Bengal as a simple merchant, pledged to peaceful trade and anxious to protect English trade by treaties and agreement with the Mughal power. He found that the Mughal viceroy could not or would not protect the English from wrongs. Whatever control the Mughal government had, it was gradually losing. "Like Shayista Khan, it was in its old age." Hedges was thus forced to the following resolution: "We must protect ourselves; we must break with the Indian Government; we must seize some convenient post and fortify it." He even proposed to build a fortified settlement at the island of Saugor at the mouth of the Hughli. To this proposal, however, the directors raised many objections. They declared that such an act would be too expensive, and that it would enrage the Mughal emperor who might possibly be assisted by the Dutch. They suggested that if the Mughals were to be attacked, it would be better to attack them from Bombay, or that Chittagong might be taken and fortified by the English. In the end the directors resolved to make war on the emperor. They obtained from James II in 1686 permission to declare war against the Mughals. They sent orders to Sir John Child at Bombay to withdraw the English factory from Surat and to seize every Mughal ship that could be captured. They despatched a large fleet—the largest which they had yet employed in the Indian seas—against Bengal. An ultimatum was sent to Shayista Khan, and if no satisfactory answer was given by him, the English were to attack Chittagong (1686).

FOUNDATION OF CALCUTTA

The resolution of the directors to establish a fortified trading place in Bengal was the turning point in the history of the fortunes of the English in that region. The English could not remain at Hughli on account of the ill-treatment that they received at the hands of the Mughal officers. Neither did their schemes to establish a fortified station at Saugor island or at Chittagong bear any fruit at all. Chittagong could not be taken by the English, and even if taken, could not be retained. It was far too distant from the northern and western parts of Bengal to be a fit centre of English trade. Some spot on the Hughli alone could serve this purpose, and the question to be settled was, which spot was to be chosen. The Saugor island at the

³⁶ Barlow and Yule, *The Diary of William Hedges* (Hakluyt Society, First Series, vols. LXXIV, LXXV, LXXVIII).

mouth of the Hughli was too exposed and at the same time too far off from the fertile inland districts to serve as a convenient trade-centre. Various other spots on the river Hughli were tried, and at last, Sutanuti, the site of Calcutta, was chosen by Job Charnock as satisfying all the objects of the English.

Job Charnock, the founder of Calcutta, seems to have come out to India in 1655 or 1656 and for a long time remained in the factories at Qasimbazar and Patna. He married an Indian wife and adopted many of the manners and customs of the country. In 1680 he was made the chief of the Qasimbazar factory. He saw that treaties with the Mughals could not protect the English trade, but that a fortified station would secure it. Besides Charnock, other Englishmen like Hedges had come to the conclusion that the English must possess a fortified place. "The idea was not the discovery of an individual mind, it was the common thought of the English in Bengal."

Job Charnock tried three places on the Hughli river before he fixed upon the last site (Sutanuti), *i.e.* Hughli, Uluberia and the island of Hijili. The town of Hughli and the site of Uluberia (at the point where the Damodar river joined the Hughli river) were both situated on the western bank of the river, completely exposed to the attack of the Mughal enemy advancing from the west. The island of Hijili near the mouth of the river seemed suitable enough at first sight, but it could be easily reached by the Mughal army from the mainland and was, besides, a malarious swamp. The last site which Charnock tried was Sutanuti on the eastern bank of the Hughli. It could not be approached by the Mughal troops from the west and was strategically safe, being bounded by morasses on its eastern and southern sides. The English could send their troops up the river and prevent the Mughals from marching on Sutanuti. Moreover, the river had scooped for itself a long deep pool which, at high tide, was accessible even to heavy ships and which had been the anchoring place of the great annual Portuguese fleets to Bengal since 1530. That pool now forms the Calcutta Harbour.

When the directors were pompously proclaiming war against the Mughals and fitting out a fleet against Bengal, Charnock found that the English factory at Hughli, of which he had lately become chief, was threatened on all sides by the Mughal troops (October 1686). He escaped with his troops on board his light boats and dropped down the river at the site of modern Calcutta. Even here the Mughals would not let Charnock rest in peace; he had to seek refuge 70 miles further down, in the island of Hijili (February 1687). Hijili was a place of great importance then, rich in grain and the centre

of salt manufacture on a large scale. Here Charnock seized an Indian fort; but his supply of provisions soon ran short, the heat grew fiercer and fiercer, and more than half his troops died of disease. The Mughal army closed in behind, cut off supplies and cannonaded the fort. It was Aurangzib's deep involvement in the war against Golconda which really saved the English from being swept off the face of Bengal. When the emperor heard of their hostilities in the distant eastern subah he asked for a map of Bengal and contented himself by ascertaining where such obscure places as Hughli, Hijli and Balasore were situated. Job Charnock was able to secure a truce with the Mughals (June 1687) and was permitted to go up the river and re-settle at Hughli town. "But to settle at Hughli town was to put himself under the paw of the panther." Charnock anchored for the second time at the site of Calcutta (September 1687) and opened negotiations for leave to build a factory there.

Charnock had at last settled at the site of Calcutta when he heard that he was superseded by the order of the directors by a braggart sea-captain named Heath. After various adventures at Balasore, Chittagong and other places³⁷, Heath, Charnock and their men sought refuge at Madras (February 1689) where they remained for more than a year. Meanwhile peace had been concluded with the emperor. Aurangzib's anger had cooled down on reflection, he knew that the trade of the English enriched the imperial coffers, that their power was formidable by sea, that they might easily interrupt the trade with Arabia and Persia and hinder the yearly pilgrimages to Mecca. He decided that it would be unwise to drive them to despair and consequently force them to abandon Bengal altogether. He affected to pardon the English for their past misconduct and granted them their privileges again. The new viceroy of Bengal, Ibrahim Khan, wrote letters to Charnock at Madras, inviting him to return to Bengal. After great hesitation Charnock accepted the offer. On 24 August 1690 he landed and made the famous 'midday halt' at Sutanuti. He found the place in a deplorable condition, nothing being left for our present accommodation and the rain falling day and night³⁸. It was the foundation day of what developed into the premier city of India.

Next year an imperial order was issued allowing the English to continue their trade in Bengal on a small yearly payment. But for several years the English had to undergo many hardships. The piratical and other violent acts of the interlopers made the Company's

³⁷ See Foster, "A Document of Charnock's Time", *Bengal Past and Present*, vol. III.

³⁸ *Diary and Consultation Book*, 24 August 1690.

servants unpopular with the Mughals. In 1696 a serious rebellion occurred in Bengal under an Afghan named Rahim Khan who plundered the whole country along the Hugli. Alarmed by rebellion and the inability of the Mughal viceroy to put it down, the English at Calcutta as well as the Dutch at Chinsura asked permission from him to fortify their factories and to raise troops. The viceroy ordered them in general terms to defend themselves; so the English began to build walls and bastions round their factory (1697). This was the origin of Fort William, named after king William III. Next year they got from the viceroy permission to rent, besides Calcutta, the villages of Sutanuti and Govindapur. The security of Calcutta, which began with the building of the fort, was now completely assured.

In 1700 the directors constituted Bengal as a separate presidency³⁹, independent of Madras, and nominated Sir Charles Eyre as its first president. Eyre resigned his post soon after and was succeeded by an old servant of the Company which was started in 1698 and had also to meet a series of attacks on the English by the local powers. In 1701 Aurangzib, who had often suspected the English of piratical acts, and was now confirmed in his suspicions by the two rival English Companies accusing each other of piracy, ordered the general arrest of all the Europeans in India. The Company's servants at Patna and Qasimbazar were seized and Beard had to see that Fort William was made sufficiently strong to resist any sudden attack. He mounted additional guns on the fort walls and strengthened the garrison of the settlement.

Aurangzib's death in 1707 made the English at Calcutta fear that their growing trade would be swept away by the coming tide of civil war and anarchy. Efforts were made to strengthen the fort, and two new bastions were built by the river side without delay. The English had by this time become so bold as to write to the Mughal officials that if any of the Company's merchants were plundered, they would recompense themselves by sacking Hugli town or any other place that lay open to them. After protracted negotiations the English got confirmation of their privileges from the new emperor, Shah Alam, and the *de facto* ruler of Bengal, Murshid Quli Khan. They looked hopefully to peace and prosperous trade.

INTERLOPERS

From 1657 to 1670 the Company was relatively free from the troubles of interlopers. But after 1670 they reappeared in the eastern waters and resorted to fresh tactics. They abused and misrepresented

³⁹ See C. R. Wilson, *Old Fort William in Bengal* (Indian Records Series).

the Company in England and injured its trade in India. The huge profits reaped by the Company had roused the jealousy of other English merchants, and to add to their troubles, disorders broke out frequently in its eastern settlements.

About 1680 the difficulties of the Company came to a climax. Many of the governors of the Company were weak and the directors were often divided as to the policy they should pursue. The interlopers, who were having a roaring trade in India, began about this time to lay the basis of that opposition to the Company which was to end in the establishment of a rival association in 1698. Even before this period the Company had recognized the necessity of relaxing the strictness of its exclusiveness and of 'allowing gaps in the barrier of (its) monopoly through which extreme disaffection or extreme zeal could find vent'. The Company permitted all English subjects as well as its own retired servants to settle in India and engage in the port-to-port trade there. The so-called 'permission ships' owned by private adventurers were also allowed to trade with India under the Company's licence and control. All that the Company demanded was that there should be no traffic in the so-called prohibited commodities which formed the staple of its own trade with Europe, and that all private ships in the Indian waters should be registered by itself. The burden of many of Sir Josia Child's letters was 'We are the Company; we rule, you serve and obey.'

In spite of these concessions the clamour of the interlopers and of the advocates of private trade increased. But for the ability and energy of Sir Josia Child who was a director from 1674 to 1699 and its leading spirit from 1681 onwards, this opposition would have pressed very sorely on the fortunes of the Company. He recognized the value of influencing public opinion in England against the interlopers by means of books and arguments. He wrote several tracts, dwelling on the advantages to England of the Company's trade and insisting that its monopoly must be preserved at all costs. He hoped that, with royal support, the Company would overcome all opposition, whether from within or from without.

Opposed to Child and his party of monopolists and exclusionists, there had gradually arisen another faction within the Company's ranks headed by one Thomson Papillon. Papillon was a staunch Whig, even as Child was a bigoted Tory. Papillon believed that the demand for an open trade with India should be met by the reconstitution of the Company on a broad basis, and that its 'joint-stock' capital possessed by a narrow body of shareholders must be replaced by a new issue of capital to which all might freely subscribe. In 1681 he actually petitioned to the king for a broadening of the Company's

basis and for the free admission of all to its membership. Child vehemently defended the Company's existing rights. Papillon was defeated and ceased to be a power among the directors.

The interlopers, however, were not at all frightened by Papillon's defeat; they sought to strike a blow at the Company through another agent. The Levant Company, which had long been jealous of the East India Company's prosperity, was now induced to petition the king for permission to trade directly with the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf by the Cape route, and thus to found practically a new Oriental company. It argued that as it was chartered to trade with all the dominions of the Turkish sultan, it must be given permission to trade with the Turkish dominions on the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf also. This petition was rejected by the king, mainly through Child's influence (1682). Next year the king issued letters patent which rendered the Company's powers very effectual in putting down the interlopers. The latter boldly denied all right on the part of the king to grant any such powers to the Company at all. The Company accepted this challenge and sued one Sandys, a notorious interloper, in the law-courts. In a great trial which dragged on for more than a year the king's right to limit foreign trade to a certain body of men was questioned. Sandys finally lost his case; it was decided that the Company's charter was a lawful exercise of the king's prerogative, its exclusive privileges were not an illegal monopoly, and its enemies were the king's enemies also. For the time being all prospects of private trade with India received a great blow.

Sir Josia Child was immensely strengthened in his position by the decision in the case of Sandys. He began a regular crusade against the interlopers who, finding themselves cut off from all legal defence for their action, soon betook to piracy. They turned into buccaneers and snapped, as it were, their fingers against both king and Company. Out of these men arose the class of bold and daring pirates like Kidd, Hand and Avery whose exploits are associated with the Indian seas. The fear of these pirates is manifest in all the correspondence of the Company and its servants. The pirates and interlopers had numerous sympathisers and friends among the Company's servants in India. The typical daring interloper was Thoms Pitt⁴⁰.

As time went on the opposition from the interlopers and others increased. People declared that no opportunity was given to outsiders to join the Company and that its stock was practically monopolized by a narrow body of 60 to 80 members, while a close oligarchy of 10 or 12 men had complete control over its affairs. The Company,

instead of enlarging its capital and inviting fresh subscriptions, borrowed money at low rates of interest whenever it was in need. Thus it was enabled to pay enormous dividends to its shareholders. The opposition of the linen and wool manufacturers to the Company was vocal; they bitterly complained that the calicos and other cotton fabrics imported by the Company displaced their goods and impoverished them. The old tale that the Company's trade was a trade in luxuries was also revived.

The Company, which was so intimately bound up with the Tory party and the king, quickly foresaw one inevitable result of the Revolution of 1688, *i.e.* that so far as the India trade was concerned, it would be a signal and support for interloping on a large scale. The directors were also afraid that the Revolution might lead to a serious attack on the exclusive monopoly granted to the Company by successive monarchs from James I. In India the news of the Revolution greatly frightened the Company's servants. Just then they were being subjected to humiliating defeats at the hands of the Mughals both in Bengal and on the Bombay coast. Some of them believed that the Revolution was a Dutch plot which, by placing the Dutch ruler on the English throne, would ultimately destroy English trade in India. Soon after William's accession to the English throne news of the humiliating pardon which the Mughal emperor had graciously extended to the English reached England. The Company's enemies immediately obtained a copy of this pardon, spread it, broadcast and declared that the Company had become a disgrace to the English name. They now made an organized effort to destroy the monopoly of the Company.

NEW COMPANY

In many parts of England the whole trade with India was severely denounced thus: "The English character was being ruined; honest English looms were idle by reason of India silks and shawls." The question was put: "Was it not a shame to see a gentleman, whose ancestors had worn nothing but stuffs made by English workmen out of English fleeces, flaunting in a calico shirt and a pair of silk stockings from Murshidabad?" The agitators were so far successful that in 1690 Parliament appointed a committee which resolved that "the best way to manage the East India trade is to have it in a new Company and a new joint-stock, this to be established by Act of Parliament; but the present Company was to continue to trade, exclusive of all others, either interlopers or permission ships, till it be established".

The Company now attempted to secure an Act of Parliament confirming its privileges. At the same time its opponents raised about

£180,000 for a New East India Company which was started in the stately hall of the Skinner's Company in Dowgate. Henceforward Dowgate and Leadenhall Street (the seat of the Old Company's offices) became synonyms for the two rival associations. Abuses, charges and recriminations were exchanged furiously between the two⁴¹. The members of the Old Company were mostly Tories, and those of the New were chiefly Whigs. The New Company certainly enjoyed much greater popularity than the Old. It had offended no one and it promised everything to everybody. But the Old Company possessed greater power. It was not so prosperous as it was a few years before; but its resources were still large, its organization was efficient, and its chief, Sir Josia Child, was as resolute and determined as ever⁴².

In 1691 Parliament resolved that the East India trade would be best carried on by a joint-stock company with exclusive monopoly, that the capital of the Old Company should be raised to a million and a half, and that no single man should hold therein more than £5,000 stock. Such an arrangement would put an end to the main charge that was levelled against the Old Company, viz. that it was controlled by a narrow cabal⁴³. Child and his party absolutely refused to accept these conditions. Parliament got angry and requested William III to dissolve the Old Company. Throughout 1692 the situation thus hung in the balance. The Commons again prayed the king to give the Company the required three years' notice. Immediately after this William departed for Holland to carry on the French war.

Meanwhile Child played his game with skill. He had already on several occasions bribed the king's court effectually and discreetly; and his bribes on this occasion produced the expected result. A new royal charter was ordered to be drawn up for the Company. The Dowgate Association protested against the granting of a charter by the king and questioned William's right to grant a monopoly at all. It declared that no monopoly could be created but by Act of Parliament; but the privy council was strongly in favour of Child and would

41 The dramatist Rowe, in his play, *The Biter*, wrote that an old gentleman cried out to his daughter: "Thou hast been bred up like a virtuous and sober maiden, and wouldst thou take the part of a profane wretch who sold his stock out of the old East India Company?" Quoted by Beckles Willson in *Ledger and Sword*, I, 409.

42 Sir Josia Child has the doubtful honour of being the first English stock-jobber and having 'practised to perfection some of the least creditable devices of the modern Stock-Exchange' (A Jobber, *The Anatomy of Exchange Alley*, quoted by Beckles Willson).

43 About 1686 the shareholders or proprietors were less than 80, all told. Even as late as 1750 there were only 500 of them. The court of 24 committees or directors may be deemed actually to constitute the Company.

not recede. In October 1693 the Great Seal of England was fixed to the new charter of the Old Company and Child stood triumphant.

Child and his fellow directors, however, forgot their prudence in the first flush of their triumph. They had never shown mercy to the interlopers; but hitherto they had punished them and confiscated their property only in eastern waters where English law and English customs were unknown. Whenever the Company had a grievance against the interlopers in England, it had hitherto sued them in the English courts and had not dared to seize their property. But now Child paraded his power in the very face of the English nation and brought trouble upon the Company.

He procured from the privy council an order for detaining a ship, the *Red-bridge*, which was lying in the Thames apparently bound for Alicante, but suspected by the Company to be bound really for India. Parliament was petitioned by a number of people to remedy this injustice and declare the India trade to be open to all. A parliamentary committee was appointed with Papillon, the old rival of Child, as its chairman. This committee pronounced that the detention of the *Red-bridge* was illegal. The House of Commons unanimously resolved (January 1694) that "all subjects of England had an equal right to trade with India and the East unless prohibited by Act of Parliament". This decision had a twofold consequence. In the first place, it struck at the root of the Company's monopoly; and in the second place, it questioned the right of the Crown to grant charters to any person or corporation for exclusive trade.

Soon another disaster befell the Company. An inquiry was held into the charge that the Company bribed men in high position; it greatly lowered the Company's prestige, not only among the public but also in the eyes of the king. The Parliament of Scotland, at the initiative of William Patelson, famous as the founder of the Bank of England, and with the approval of the king, incorporated a Scottish East India Company with the special privilege of trading to Africa and the East. The Company could not question the right of William, and of the independent Scottish Parliament, to create the Scottish Company. The Dowgate Association, in the meantime, continued to prosper, took to itself the title of the New Company and opposed tooth and nail all the petitions of the Old Company to Parliament.

In 1697 the French war was ended by the treaty of Ryswick, and the government was in need of a very large sum of money to pay off the expense of the war. The Old Company offered to advance £700,000 at 4 per cent provided its charter was confirmed by Parliament and the right to exclusive trade with India was legally granted to it. The

Dowgate Association brought a counter-proposal that it would lend the government £2,000,000 at 8 per cent. and in return Parliament should give it the right to exclusive trade with India. The government jumped at this proposal. The Old Company was seized with panic; it also offered two million pounds, but its offer came too late. The bill creating the New East India Company declared that all those who subscribed to the loan of £2,000,000 would form the General Society trading to the East Indies, and each of them would be at liberty to trade individually to the amount of his subscription. Some of these subscribers became individual traders on their own account. The Old Company was given three years' notice to wind up its affairs and was permitted to trade with India until the end of September 1701. The great majority of the subscribers to the loan were members of the Dowgate Association; but the Old Company contrived to subscribe to the new concern 300,000 guineas in the name of its treasurer, John Du Bois, and thus by one stroke it became the leading proprietor in the new body. The New Company was given a charter by the king in pursuance of the Act of Parliament.

The Old Company did not lose heart; it tried to minimize the consequences of the formation of the rival Company. The New Company, in its turn, confidently expected to step into the Old Company's shoes in India on comparatively easy terms; it hoped to buy at an advantage the factories and other properties of the Old Company in India, at the end of the three years when the latter's life would expire. But, as already mentioned, the Old Company had taken very effective steps to prevent such a fate for itself and resolved to trade in the New Company to the extent of its subscription.

The New Company had a very small sum of money to begin trade with. Its monopoly was subject to various limitations. There was the Old Company with all its privileges undiminished for the next three years. There were those individual subscribers who had chosen to trade on their own private account.

The Old Company, in spite of its fine show of courage, had to pass through a period of great trouble. Sir Josia Child died early in 1699; his old enemy Papillon entered the service of the New Company. Many of the discontented servants of the Old Company, such as Master and Heathcote, deserted it and went over to its rival. Papillon, conscious of the latent vitality of the Old Company, urged his new employers to work for a coalition with it. But the Old Company refused to consent to a union; it resolved to go on trading as a corporate body even after September 1701 on the amount of its subscription to the New Company's stock.

In February 1699 the Old Company prayed to Parliament that it

should be continued as a corporation even after 1701 when its charter would expire. Though its petition was disallowed the Old Company still appeared confident and declared that it could afford to wait until affairs should take a better turn. The New Company once more began to negotiate for a coalition and asked Papillon to ascertain the views of the Old Company about this project.

In January 1700 the Old Company presented another petition to Parliament to the same effect. In February Parliament passed the bill, and two months later, the king gave his assent. Thus the Old Company was preserved in its existence and in its pursuit of eastern trade, though not in its monopoly. Then followed a temporary lull in the strife of the two companies. The king now recommended a union. The New Company was only too anxious for a coalition and declared that it would submit to any reasonable terms.

One of the most prominent issues in the elections to Parliament in 1701 was the question of the India trade. When Parliament met at last, each party was strongly represented in it. A strenuous fight appeared likely, but the king reminded both the companies about the proposal for union. Seven persons nominated by each company conferred together. The conference could not at first come to any understanding. Just then the Old Company made a last and desperate attempt to get the upper hand. It proposed to take over the stock of the New Company, i.e. to take over the New Company's share of the sum of two millions sterling lent to the government in 1698, and it also promised to reduce the interest from 8 per cent to 5 per cent.

In the early part of 1702 it appeared as if the long-desired union of the two companies would be forced from high quarters. The War of the Spanish Succession was about to begin, their own ships and trade would be in great danger from the French fleet and privateers, and it would be sheer folly on their part to be mutually wrangling just then when they ought to be united for the protection of their common interests. Moreover, the trade of both had become entirely disorganized owing to the fierce hostilities between their respective servants in India. To add to their troubles, in England itself there was now suddenly manifested a strong aversion to the entire India trade, and Parliament even passed an Act prohibiting the wearing of Indian silks.

UNION OF TWO COMPANIES

Soon after the death of William III in March 1702, and just before the declaration of the war with Spain and France, the instrument of union was ratified by both the Companies. According to its terms a

court of 24 managers was formed, 12 chosen by each Company. These were to control the settlements and trade of the United Company. The capital stock of the United Company was to consist of the sum of £2,000,000 lent to the government in 1698 by the New Company. The Old Company agreed to purchase as much of the stock of the New Company as would bring its share of the joint capital to £1,000,000. The dead stock of the two Companies, i.e. their forts, factories and buildings, as distinguished from their ships, money and merchandise, was to be taken over by the United Company; the Old Company was to cede to the latter the islands of St Helena and Bombay which it had got from Charles II in fee simple.

While the rival companies had been fighting in England, their servants had been carrying on a bitter struggle in India. The New Company determined, like the Old, to set up three presidencies and chose exactly the same places where its rival was already settled. It despatched three men, Sir Nicholas Waite, John Pitt (a cousin of the interloper, governor Pitt) and Sir Edward Littleton, as its presidents at Bombay, Madras and Bengal respectively. A regular duel then followed between the presidents of the rival companies.

The New Company endeavoured to improve the position of its presidents by getting for them the powers and title of king's consuls. As such they enjoyed authority not only over their own servants but also over all Englishmen living in India. The three presidents reached India in the course of 1699. They were to be shortly followed by Sir William Norris, member of Parliament from Liverpool, who had been appointed as the king's ambassador to the Mughal emperor for the purpose of negotiating a treaty and getting large privileges for the New Company.

Sir William Norris regarded himself as the historic successor of Sir Thomas Roe and arrived in great state off Masulipatam which, instead of Surat, was his starting point for the Mughal emperor's camp. The entire breadth of the Deccan, which was then in a very disorderly state, had to be traversed before he could reach Aurangzib's camp. After waiting for nearly a year Norris set out for Surat and reached that port in December 1700. After six weeks at Surat the ambassador set forth with a large following for the emperor's camp at Panhala near Bijapur. When at last he got an audience with the emperor, the latter declared that the English were mainly responsible for the piracies committed on the Mughal ships and that he would grant the New Company *farmans* for trade to Bombay, Madras and Bengal only if it should undertake to suppress piracy altogether. The embassy ended in miserable failure to which the arrogant Waite contributed his own measure.

These developments could not be ignored after the union of the two companies. To establish a workable organization for the transaction of the United Company's affairs in India, it was necessary to combine the servants of the two companies together. In Madras Thomas Pitt was appointed governor and president of the United Company, but his rival John Pitt was nominated to Fort St David and promised the succession to the presidency. Governor Pitt hastened to make himself acceptable to the United Company; he served his new masters faithfully. In Bengal it was not decided for a year whether Beard or Littleton should be the president of the United Company, and a sort of rotation government was established, composed of four members each of the councils of the New and Old companies. This proved a failure. Beard died in 1705; Littleton who had already displayed his incompetence was allowed to continue. It was at Bombay that the quarrel was the worst. The United Company decided that Gayer, who was then in Mughal custody at Surat, should become the governor with the infamous Waite as his subordinate at Surat. Waite ruled Bombay for several years.

The United Company wanted that there should be a complete amalgamation of the two companies, but each company feared that the other would obtain a preponderating influence in the union. The partial union of 1702 did not work satisfactorily, and soon the demand was either for complete union or for final severance. But fortunately the government stepped into the rescue. The state was in need of money, and Earl Godolphin, the Lord High Treasurer, proposed to borrow from them £1,200,000. Both the companies hastened to pay the sum asked for. A bill was passed in Parliament (March 1708) by which the two companies were directed to submit all their differences and disputes to the final decision of Earl Godolphin. On 20 September 1708 his decision was delivered; the Old London Company surrendered its charters and became merged with the English (New) Company under the name of the United Company.

The United Company now had made up a total loan of £3,200,000. Its privileges were not to cease until three years' notice after 1726 until the repayment by the government of the total amount of loan. The union was not merely economic but personal also. The leading spirits of both the Old and New companies were the leading men of the United Company. But among them the greatest and the richest were the Old Company men. "The Old Company may seem to have been swamped by the New; in theory perhaps it was so; but in fact and historically the continuity of the ancient body was maintained."

With this final union of the two companies the English power in India entered upon a new period of growth. Henceforward the govern-

ment could not easily threaten the Company with extinction, for the latter would have first to be paid its three millions and more. Henceforward also the growth of the Company's power in India was steady, and its prosperity continuous. It was this uninterrupted progress in its power and wealth that enabled the Company to grapple strenuously with the French forty years later. Godolphin's award closed the factory period in the development of the Company and initiated a new era which converted the Company from a trading corporation into a ruling body.

EARLY FRENCH SETTLEMENTS IN INDIA

The fortunes which the Portuguese, the English and the Dutch so speedily acquired from their trade with the East Indies tempted the French nation also to follow in their wake. Henry IV, king of France (1589-1610), tried to encourage the formation of French companies for eastern exploration and trade about the time when the Dutch and the English were laying the foundations of their East India Companies. Cardinal Richelieu, the great minister of Louis XIII (1610-40), promoted schemes of exploration and colonization. He observed in his *Testament Politique* that "the temper of the French being so hasty as to wish the accomplishment of their desires in the moment of their conception, long voyages are not proper for them . . . the trade that could be done with the East Indies and Persia . . . ought not to be neglected".

Shortly before his death in 1642 Richelieu actually formed a company with the object of planting settlements in Madagascar and the neighbouring islands. Fort Dauphin in Madagascar was regarded as a convenient starting point for establishing trade relations with Persia, India and Ceylon. The scheme appeared to thrive for some time, but failed later and was abandoned. The reports of travellers like Tavernier stimulated Colbert, the well-known minister of Louis XIV, to propose the establishment of a French Company for trading in the East Indies which should be different from the several municipal and provincial companies like the Company of St Malo, the coral companies of Marseilles and the Company de Morbihan that were all of limited means.

The first French Company that traded with India proper was not formed till 1664. The formation of the Company was preceded by the publication of a pamphlet by Charpentier, the Academician, addressed to all Frenchmen and detailing the advantages of establishing such a Company. The practical initiative for the new undertaking was taken by Colbert. He was a great statesman; his object was to increase the

national wealth, develop manufactures, promote trade and encourage colonial enterprises. A company for trade with India (*Compagnie des Indes Orientalis*) was started under his direct supervision, and it received all that was possible in the way of royal support and state aid. Colbert clearly saw that the previous commercial enterprises of his nation had failed because they did not receive sufficient support from the state and the nobility. He now gave the Company an advance of three million francs and guaranteed it against all losses which it might suffer during the first ten years of its existence. Moreover, in order to induce the nobles to take part in this venture, he persuaded the king to issue a proclamation declaring that it was not derogatory to the prestige and honour of the nobles to participate in the India trade. Louis XIV granted the Company full power over the island of Madagascar and all other territories that it might conquer or occupy, and promised to defend its acquisitions against its enemies. Both king and minister were resolved to make the India trade a great national undertaking.

There were to be 21 directors, 12 for Paris, and 9 for the provinces. The Company was to have exclusive privilege of trade from the Cape of Good Hope to India and the South Seas; it was also to enjoy the perpetual grant of Madagascar and the neighbouring islands and numerous other privileges of trade. The chamber of directors was to be renewed one-third every year. This body was empowered to appoint governors for the Company's possessions. It could send ambassadors to, and make wars and treaties with Indian princes. The Company could fly the royal flag. Its motto *Florebo quocumque ferar* signified the great hopes laid on its activities. Royal representatives were sent to the shah of Persia and the Great Mughal. Madagascar was proudly named the *Ile Dauphine*. The first fleet was to push up the East African coast to Arabia, and the following one was to reach the ports of Peninsular India and establish factories there.

Here may be described the contrast that existed between the English and the French Companies from their very birth. "While in England the merchants wrested their privileges step by step from the Crown, in France the monarch spurred on an unwilling people. The king, the court and the nobility (in France) provided by far the greater part of the capital . . . The fatal flaw, inherent from the first, was that the Company was suspect in the eyes of the mercantile community. In spite of royal pressure, their contributions were but a fraction of those provided by the bureaucracy and the nobility. Merchants were not forthcoming to serve on the direction; and in a very few years the Crown found it necessary to nominate the directors; and the Company became almost a separate department of state. While the English

tactories only gradually and against the will of the Company grew into settlements, the French consciously aimed at colonization. All the first fleets that left the ports of France carried emigrants. The English pioneers as a rule were rough sea-captains and traders. The French sent out men of gentle birth."⁴⁴

EARLY FRENCH SETTLEMENTS

The first object of the French Company was to revive the colonizing schemes of Richelieu in Madagascar which would serve very well as a half-way house to India and to send out a body of colonists there with great hopes extended to them. The colonists, however, soon perceived that the island had none of the attractions attributed to it. They strove very hard to keep up a bare living, but in vain. They soon abandoned the island and removed to the neighbouring settlements of Bourbon and Mauritius. Mauritius was first colonized by the Portuguese and then abandoned by them. Later on it was occupied by the French in 1649 and an attempt was made to colonize it, though ineffectually. It continued desolate till it was peopled by the French refugees from Madagascar. The two islands, thus colonized, soon attained to some prosperity and power.

Meanwhile Caron, a Dutchman by birth and a servant of the Dutch East India Company who had gained vast experience in eastern trade, grew dissatisfied with his Dutch employers, resigned his place and sought service with the French. In 1667 Colbert, who was greatly taken up with him, appointed him director-general of French commerce in India and sent him out at the head of an expedition to the Indian coast. Caron felt that Madagascar was of no use at all for his purpose, and proceeded to the Bombay coast where he established a factory at Surat (1668). Soon afterwards another factory was established at Masulipatam on the east coast in the dominions of the sultan of Golconda; and Caron even secured from the sultan the right of exemption from import and export duties for his goods.

Feeling convinced that the possession of a maritime stronghold was essential for the French, Caron suggested to Colbert the idea of the conquest of Ceylon which was then only partially occupied by the Dutch to whom the ruler of Kandy was opposed. He argued that the seaboard of the island would be useful as a base for fortified naval stations and would serve as a starting point for a series of colonies in India itself.

Colbert sent ten ships under de la Haye, who reached Surat in October 1671, and, taking Caron with him, sailed against the Dutch

⁴⁴ Cambridge Modern History, V, 702-703. See also Cambridge History of India, V, 64 et seq.

settlements in Ceylon, viz. Point de Galle and Trincomalai. The expedition was not efficiently fitted out; moreover, the English who were allies of the French in this war were lukewarm in their support. The attack on Point de Galle was repulsed by the Dutch, but Trincomalai was acquired and garrisoned by the French fleet. This proved, however, to be only a momentary success, for a powerful Dutch fleet, which arrived then, recovered the place and drove out the French garrison. Meantime the French under de la Haye and Caron had proceeded to San Thome, near Madras, which was then in Dutch occupation, and carried it by storm. But for want of provisions and men they could not hold the place for long; it was surrendered to the Dutch by de la Haye in September 1674. Thus the only fruits that remained to the French Company after nearly ten years of struggle were the factories at Surat and Masulipatam, and it had incurred the wrath of the Dutch who were then the strongest European power in eastern waters. Caron was recalled. He left for France in October 1672, but died on the voyage. This was the end of the first able but typically unreliable servant of the French Company in India.

MARTIN AND PONDICHERY

Caron left behind him in India as his trusted lieutenant Francois Martin, the director of the Masulipatam factory. Like Caron, Martin had served under the Dutch before joining French service and learnt all the secrets of their success. In order to provide the French at San Thome with a place of refuge when the Dutch drove them out, Lespinay⁴⁵ and Martin had entered into negotiations with Sher Khan Lodi, the governor of Karnatak under the sultan of Bijapur. They got from him, in January 1673, a piece of land on the coast about 15 miles to the north of Cuddalore, known as Puduchery, which later on came to be corrupted into Pondicherry. Lespinay established himself there in the following month; Martin joined him in the beginning of 1674. A few French refugees from San Thome settled at this place and soon formed a prosperous and growing colony. Sher Khan Lodi was in frequent want of money which Martin liberally supplied him. In return Lodi extended his warm friendship to the French and permitted them to fortify their settlement. The place was fairly sheltered from the violence of the monsoon, and the roadstead in front of it prevented the near approach of warships and rendered it secure against any sudden attack. It was

⁴⁵ A volunteer soldier under de la Haye. He wrote an account of his activities in his *Mémoires* (ed. Henri Froidevaux).

in easy communication with the markets of the interior districts, and its trade developed very rapidly.

It is said that Pondicherry was 'founded and nurtured amid the clash of arms and the clamour of falling kingdoms'. Martin had to take great precautions against Pondicherry becoming a prey to Shivaji, who raided Karnatak in 1677. Shivaji captured the fortresses of Jinji, Vellore and Arni, defeated Sher Khan Lodi and threatened Pondicherry itself on the ground that the French were the good friends of Bijapur. But Martin succeeded in smoothing the ruffled temper of the Maratha hero, and promised him implicit obedience and payment for permission to trade. Pondicherry was safe for the time, and Martin was left undisturbed.

The first decade of Pondicherry's life was marked not only by threats of attack and growing political anarchy in the neighbourhood, but also by the effects of poverty that marked the French Company and compelled it to abandon the factories at Bantam and in Tonkin in Indo-China. Martin returned to Pondicherry, after a short absence, in 1686 and strove feverishly to build up its trade. Colbert's son, the Marquis de Seignelay, Minister of Marine, obtained for the Company new capital, reorganized its directorate and revitalized its activities. In the words of Henry Froidevaux, "The re-establishment of the French at Masulipatam, the dispatch of Deslandes to Bengal where a French agent had appeared so early as 1674, and co-operation with the great Siam enterprise which was for a while at this time the pet scheme of the royal government, form the chief evidences of Martin's activity, though they were not all equally successful."⁴⁶

The progress of the settlement was then unbroken for some years. Its trade grew to large dimensions and it got the reputation of being one of the most prosperous European settlements in the East. But the very prosperity of Pondicherry became a source of peril to it.

All the European wars of Louis XIV reacted adversely upon the fortunes of the French in India. From 1672 to 1713 France was almost continuously at war with Holland. We have seen how in the war of 1672-74 the Dutch recovered Trincomalai and San Thome and repulsed all French attacks. On the capitulation of San Thome Martin was left at Pondicherry with but six Frenchmen, 'to act as affairs may require'. He refused to go to Surat because he was convinced of the commercial value of Pondicherry. But the Dutch, who profited from their close union with the English after the Revolution of 1688, cast covetous eyes upon Pondicherry in 1693. The

moment was opportune. The French navy was too busy in European waters to be of any use at all for the defence of French settlements in India. Pondicherry fell into the hands of the Dutch after a short siege (August-September 1693); and for six years it remained under their rule. The Dutch knew well the value of their conquest; they built new walls, strengthened the fortifications and converted the place into the strongest and best-fortified European settlement in India. But in the treaty of Ryswick (1697) it was stipulated that Pondicherry should be returned to the French with all its fortifications intact; the place was not, however, actually handed over to them till 1699.

Thus Martin once more entered into possession of Pondicherry and recommenced his work of improvement. In 1701 Pondicherry was made the headquarters of all the possessions of the French in the East, and Martin was appointed director-general of French affairs in India. It has been held that Martin foresaw the decadence of the Indian powers and planned the acquisition of political predominance for the French 'as the essential condition of free commercial development'. He wrote to the Minister of Marine in December 1700 that "prosperous settlements and a few well-fortified places will give (the Company) a great position among these people". He built solid walls round Pondicherry, helped to strengthen the Company's position at Chandernagar in Bengal where Deslandes had planted a factory in 1690, and attempted to revive even the declining French factory at Surat. He completed the building of Fort Louis at Pondicherry, under the darkening shadows of the war of Spanish Succession which created a serious setback for India trade and left Pondicherry to its own resources.

Before Martin died in December 1706 the affairs of the settlement had vastly improved and the Indian population alone rose to nearly 40,000. The French were very well treated at the courts of the local rulers, and their progress did not create any envy or jealousy in the minds of the latter. Martin had earned, by the fairness and justice of his dealings with Indian merchants and princes, their personal trust, esteem and regard. He was considered to be their well-wisher and frequently invited to mediate in their disputes. By these means, he succeeded in laying the foundation for 'that intimate connection with native powers which the most illustrious of his successors (Dupleix) used' with success.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ For Martin's career and achievements see his *Mémoires* (3 vols., ed. Martineau). For trade and life of the Indian community at Pondicherry see *Proceedings of Indian Historical Records Commission*, XX.

DECLINE OF FRENCH INFLUENCE

In marked contrast with the prosperity of Pondicherry French influence decayed elsewhere in India. Their factory at Surat was abandoned in 1714. The factory at Masulipatam was not flourishing. Chandernagar on the Hughli in Bengal was occupied by the French in 1676 and ceded to them by a grant of the Mughal emperor in 1688. But while the neighbouring English settlement of Calcutta and the Dutch possession of Chinsura both prospered and grew strong, the French at Chandernagar never attempted to be anything more than small traders. It was not until Dupleix was appointed in 1731 as chief of Chandernagar that a vigorous attempt was made to infuse fresh life into this settlement. There were also small French factories at Balasore and Qasimbazar, but nothing is known about them. The wretchedness and distress of the French Company and the consequent decline of the French factories in India persisted until 1719 when the united *Campagnie des Indes* was formed by a royal edict and entrusted with whole of French colonial trade.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

HISTORY OF SOUTH INDIA, INCLUDING EUROPEAN STRUGGLES DOWN TO 1763

SUBAH OF KARNATAK

THE MUCHAL DOMINION in Karnatak was established by the occupation of Jinji (January 1698) by Zulfiqar Khan Nasrat Jang who renamed the place as Nusratgaddha and appointed a qiladar in charge of it. While the charge of Jinji was given over to a Bundela, Sarup Singh, Zulfiqar Khan, being ordered back to the Deccan, made over the faujdari of Karnatak to nawab Daud Khan Panni, with Muhammad Sayyid Khan as the diwan. Daud Khan transferred his headquarters from Jinji, which was found to be unhealthy, to Arcot on the Palar river. He may be regarded as the first regular nawab of Karnatak¹. He ruled in this capacity from 1700 to 1708 and was later killed while fighting with Sayyid Husain Ali Khan (1715) in the reign of the emperor Farrukh-siyar.

Muhammad Sayyid, later known as Sa'adatullah Khan, left by Daud Khan as diwan and faujdar, was the regular and acknowledged nawab of Karnatak from 1710 to 1732. Being a *nait* (*nawayat*), he invited his fellow-clansmen from the Konkan and bestowed on them jagirs and forts. Even a hostile historian, Burhan-ud-din, author of the *Tuzuk-i-Walajahi*, says that "the people regarded his days as the best of the past and were of one accord in praising the justice of his *nizamat*". He was on good terms with the neighbouring rulers and also with the jagirdars of his subah. This subah was called Karnatak Pavanghat and comprised in its widest extent all the coast country below the Ghats, from the small river Gundalakama which falls into the sea near Motupalli, to Cape Comorin. The coast country south

¹ The Bijapuri (or Adil Shahi) Karnatak comprised the territories conquered by the Adil Shahi generals in the seventeenth century. It was mostly Balaghat, including the districts of Bangalore and Sera; but it included a strip of the Payanghat region as well and stretched across the Ghats to Vellore and Jinji and went down to the limits of the Tanjore kingdom. The governorship of the two Karnataks, of which we read in the chronicles, meant the rule of the Balaghat portion of the Bijapuri Karnatak and the Payanghat portions of both the Hyderabadi and Bijapuri Karnataks.

of the Coleroon was at best only tributary to the nawab. Central Karnatak extended from the Coleroon to the North Pennar, and northern Karnatak stretched beyond that river to the limits of the Guntur sarkar.

In 1713 a division was effected in the jurisdiction of the Karnatak subah. The Hyderabad or Golconda Karnatak (conquered by the Qutb Shahis) included portions of the Payanghat as also of the Balaghat (country to the west of the Ghats). In Balaghat five sarkars belonged to Hyderabad (Sidhout, Gandikotta, Gutti, Gurumkonda and Cumbum). All these, except Gutti, formed the petty state of the nawabs of Cuddapah, while Gutti ultimately fell into the hands of Murar Rao Ghorpade. The Payanghat portion of Hyderabad Karnatak constituted the subah of Arcot; and the nucleus of the dominions of the nawab comprised northern Karnatak as defined above and a portion of central Karnatak. Sa'adatullah Khan retained the government of the two Karnataks for four years till Amin Khan was appointed in 1713 to the charge of the Bijapuri Balaghat and styled as the nawab of Sera. After this Sa'adatullah came to be styled as the nawab or nazim of Arcot.

TANJORE, MADURA AND RAMNAD

Political power in the country to the south of the Krishna was distributed, except in Mysore, Tanjore, Madura and Travancore, mainly among the nawabs of Arcot, Cuddapah, Sera, Kurnool and Savanur. Zulfiqar Khan had, in the course of his operations round Jinji, invaded the kingdom of Tanjore (March 1694) and compelled its ruler Shahji (son and successor of Vyankoji) to pay tribute and cede some forts. Rani Mangammal, regent for the minor nayak of Madura, cleverly accepted Mughal protection and got back the territories that her state had lost to Tanjore. Shahji, however, subsequently provoked Madura into war in 1700. He was joined by the Marava chief, Kilavan *setupati* of Ramnad (1671-1718) who sought to achieve independence of the overlordship of Madura. In the course of the operations, Narasappaiya, the *dalarai* of Madura, endangered the safety of Tanjore itself and had to be bought off with a large sum. The *setupati* laid siege to Madura itself in 1698 and was in possession of it for two years, till he was driven out by Narasappaiya who raided the Marava country in 1702. The *setupati* brought into the field a large army and scattered the Madura troops; he also inflicted a crushing defeat on the Tanjore forces which had betrayed him, joined Madura and secured possession of the border fort of Arantangi.²

² Bertrand, *La Mission du Madure*, IV, 200 et seq.

Shahji's successor, Sarabhoji I (1712-28), ruled conjointly with his brother Tukoji. Tanjore took up the cause of Bhavani Shankar, an illegitimate son of Kilavan setupati, who contested with Tandai Tevar for the possession of the Marava chieftainship. Anandaraao, the dalavai of Tanjore, led an army to help the pretender while both the Madura nayak and the *tondaiman* of Pudukkottai took up the cause of his rival. The Tanjore troops mined the walls of Ramnad fort and placed Bhavani Shankar on the throne. But the latter did not cede to his Tanjore ally the stipulated lands; he also made himself unpopular by his arrogance and alienated many of his poligars. Sasivarna Periya Udvai Tevar, the most powerful among them, secured the support of Sarabhoji who sent an army into Ramnad for the overthrow of his quandam ally. Bhavani Shankar was defeated, captured and thrown into prison, where he died in a short time. Ramnad was partitioned into the Greater and Lesser Marava chiefships, Tanjore got a reward. The Marava chieftainship was divided into five parts, three of which were given to Katta Tevar, uncle of Tandai Tevar, and the other two to Sasivarna Tevar. The latter's territories constituted the Little Marava principality of Sivaganga.

Rani Mangammal ruled over the principality of the famous Tirumala nayak from 1689 to 1706 as regent for her grandson. Her rule was marked by good sense and success. Madura accepted Mughal supremacy, Christianity was encouraged, roads and public edifices were built, and the kingdom was restored to a degree of its former strength and unity. But the rule of her successor, Vijavaranga Chokkanatha (1706-32), saw the kingdom sink into disruption and ruin. Neither the dalavai, Kasturi Rangayya, nor the *piadhani*, Venkata-krishnaiva, could check it while their successors Narasappaya and Venkatāraghavacharya were markedly corrupt. Vijavaranga died without any male issue; his wife Minakshi became the regent and adopted Vijayakumara, the son of a collateral relation. The extinction of the nayak kingdom followed in 1736. The central government was too weak to prevent internal disruption and the rebelliousness of the poligars, while the Portuguese and the Dutch had become powers to be reckoned with.

PUDUKKOTTAI

The tondaimans of Pudukkottai came into prominence on account of their services to the nayaks about the close of the seventeenth century. Their origin is traced to the Kallar tribes, settled in the country to the north-east of Trichinopoly, south of Tanjore and north of Ramnad which was originally known as Arasu. In the territory

of the poligars who were most numerous in the Tinnevelly and Madura countries, neither the nayak rulers nor their successors, the nawabs of Karnatak, attempted to exercise, or claim the right to exercise, civil and criminal jurisdiction. If the ruler's tributes were paid and the feudatories sent him assistance in his wars, his demands were satisfied. A considerable portion of the country south of Trichinopoly had thus passed by the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries into the hands of the poligars. In the regions of Madura and Dindigul most of the lands had passed out of the hands of the nayaks. This happened also in the country north of the Tambaraparani.

It may be mentioned that the *palayam* organization had also spread into the Karnatak and Mysore regions. There is a tradition that under Vijayanagar rule each *palayam* was normally composed of 33 villages; but there is no trace of this arrangement in the fiefs of the Tamil country. In the Kannada country the poligar was originally deemed to be an *udayar* (*wodeyar*, proprietor).³ The Tamil term, *udayar*, was also used by the Tamil chiefs and is found occasionally among the titles of ancient rulers mentioned in inscriptions.

Under Chikka Deva Raja, one of the most distinguished rulers of the Wodeyar line, Mysore extended its frontier northwards to Bijapuri Karnatak. Bangalore, Tumkur and a part of Baramahal and Salem were acquired, while in the west the possessions of Bednur (Nagar) were penetrated into. Trichinopoly was besieged in 1696. An embassy was sent to Auranzib's court at Ahmadnagar in order to renew the friendship already secured. It returned in 1700 bringing a signet from the emperor, the title of *Jagat Deva Raya*, as well as the privilege of sitting on an ivory throne. Tirumalaraya, the minister of Chikka Deva Raya, wrote several works, all bearing the sovereign's name and titles, some of which are of real historical value. The titles of the rulers of Vijayanagar, such as *Rajadhiraja*, are ascribed to Chikka Deva Raya by contemporary writers. Such titles "would be meaningless except on the basis that the sovereign to whom they were given was held to be the successor of the last representative of the Vijayanagar dynasty to which they belonged". Wilks has given an unfair picture of this ruler, which is not supported by contemporary literary and inscriptional evidence. At the time of his death in 1704 his kingdom extended from Palni and the Anamalais in the

³ The zamindari of Udayarpalayam (in the Trichinopoly district) was an example of the use of the term *udayar* in the sense of proprietor and feudal chief. The name of the far-famed fort of Palamcottah (in Tinnevelly) is said to be derived from *palaiyan* (chief, meaning poligar) and *kottai* (fort).

south to Midagesi in the north and from Karnatakgadh in the Baramahal to the borders of Coorg in the west.

Raghunatha *raya tondaiman* (1686-1730), the first ruler of Pudukkottai to assume the title of *raya tondaiman*, acquired the nucleus of the state and subdued several poligar chiefs, like those of Turaiyur, Ariyalur, Udayarpalaiyam and Valikandapuram. We learn from the letters of the Madura Mission that by 1711 the tondaiman had made himself formidable even to the nayak of Madura, and within a few years after that date he became for a time all-powerful at the navak court at Trichinopoly.

MARATHA EXPEDITIONS INTO KARNATAK

Apart from the European settlements on the east and west coasts, the planting of Maratha chiefships on the northern and western fringes of Karnatak deserve notice. Sa'adatullah Khan's rule was not always quiet; at Jinji there was a bloody strife in 1724 for the possession of the fortress between Tiyar Khan and Abdul Nabi Khan.⁴ In 1725 Nizam-ul-mulk sent Iwaz Khan to clear Karnatak of Maratha agents and raiders who had penetrated into the province. Iwaz Khan marched against Trichinopoly and Tanjore. Raja Sarfoji of Tanjore, being of a collateral branch of the Maratha royal family, appealed for help to Shahu at Satara. He sent a large army under Fateh Singh Bhonsle to whom he had given the jagir of Akalkot and a special interest in the chauth of Karnatak. Fateh Singh was accompanied by the peshwa and the pratnidhi. The Marathas exacted tribute, in their usual manner, from Gadag, Bednur and Srirangapatnam in the western plateau. But on account of Fateh Singh's indifference and the mutual enmity between the peshwa and the pratnidhi little effective result was obtained from the campaign.

Some time during this period Nizam-ul-mulk personally marched into the snhabh of nawab Sa'adatullah where, according to the Tamil chronicle, he was satisfied with the latter's conduct.⁵ Another Maratha expedition was sent to south India under the leadership of Fateh Singh Bhonsle. Although aided by raja Tukoji of Tanjore it was as barren of result as its predecessor. It was probably because of the

⁴ Madras Minutes and Consultations for 1725, pp. 85, 92.

⁵ It is difficult to be sure of the exact date of Nizam-ul-mulk's first visit to Karnatak during the rule of Sa'adatullah Khan. We know 1721 was the only year, besides 1742, in which the nizam marched into Karnatak. A Marathi news-letter, dated February 1721 (SPD. X. 8), tells us that the nizam had marched into Karnatak and was then at Savanur in the neighbourhood of Dharwar and Bednur. Perhaps, soon after this, in the summer of 1721, the nizam paid a visit to the court of Sa'adatullah and settled the affairs of Karnatak.

threatening attitude of the Marathas that Nizam-ul-mulk transferred his capital from Aurangabad to Hyderabad in 1726. The latter place, being nearer to the Karnatak and Mysore regions, was a more convenient centre for checking the Maratha predatory incursions and at the same time concealing his own movements more effectively from the court of Satara.

A new centre of Maratha power was established at Gutti by Murar Rao Chorpade. Several other Maratha captains held sway on the fringes of Karnatak, at Belgaum, Koppal, Sandur and Bellary.

SA'ADATULLAH, DOST ALI AND CHANDA SAHIB

Sa'adatullah tried to establish his effective authority in his subah. One of his methods was to put many of the forts in charge of his own men. Madras experienced some troubles from the nawab, but successfully resisted his attempts at recovery of some of the previous grants of the neighbouring villages.

The nawab had no issue and had adopted a son of his uncle, by name Muhammad Sayyid, Khan Babadur. He had also a nephew, Safdar Ali Khan, who was the qiladar of Karunguzhi (near Chingleput). After his death Baqir Ali Khan, the qiladar of Vellore, and son of Ghulam Ali, the deceased nawab's brother, was raised to the *musnud* in preference to both Safdar Ali and Khan Bahadur. Baqir Ali soon gave it up to his younger brother Dost Ali Khan, and retired to the fort of Vellore.

The new nawab, Dost Ali, acquired a reputation for moderation and justice. But, as Burhan-ud-din remarks, "His kindness was such that his own community could with impunity become his secret opponents, while professing loyalty." He had a son named Safdar Ali Khan, and five sons-in-law, of whom the eldest was Ghulam Murtaza Ali Khan, son of Baqir Ali, and the third was the famous adventurer Chanda Sahib *alias* Husain Dost Khan.

In 1734 Safdar Ali and Chanda Sahib led a roving expedition to the south. They contrived to storm Tanjore and place it for a time in the hands of Bade Sahib, a brother of Chanda Sahib.⁶ In the Tanjore kingdom there was domestic anarchy: rebellions of pretenders and dissensions of other sorts. The court was dominated by an infamous Muslim adventurer, Sayyid Khan.

The rise of Chanda Sahib to power at Trichinopoly was closely connected with this expedition. The Tamil chronicle of Ananda Kone

⁶ This expedition is not fully detailed by either Grant Duff or Wilks, but newsletters of the Madura Mission are helpful.

attributes the expedition of Safdar Ali and Chanda Sahib to the positive instigation of Rani Minakshi of Madura, the widow of Vijayaranga Chokkanatha nayak, who is said to have written to Chanda Sahib for assistance. Other indigenous chronicles, both Tamil and Telugu, give different versions of the sequence of events that led to the acquisition of Trichinopoly by Chanda Sahib and the death of Minakshi. The rani had assumed power on her husband's death in 1732 and had adopted a son from a collateral branch. Bangaru Tirumala, the father of the adopted boy, and dalavai Vankatacharya formed an alliance to bring about her deposition. One or the other of them made overtures to Safdar Ali, promising to pay him 30 lakhs of rupees for help in ousting the rani from power. She became alarmed and, in her turn, made overtures to Chanda Sahib who had been left behind by Safdar Ali and promised to pay him one crore of rupees if she should be secured in the undisturbed possession of the kingdom. She also stipulated that Chanda Sahib should take an oath on the Quran that he would fulfil his promise. Chanda Sahib was then admitted into the fort of Trichinopoly. Bangaru Tirumala and his son were quietly sent away to Madura, and Chanda Sahib returned to Arcot.

Undeterred by this reverse, the enemies of the rani continued their activities. In 1736 Chanda Sahib proceeded a second time to Trichinopoly. He quickly made himself master of the kingdom by capturing Madura and Dindigul. Bangaru Tirumala, defeated in a bloody battle near Ammayyapalayam, fled for security into the jungles of Sivaganga. The disappointed rani, who found herself a helpless prisoner, committed suicide.⁷ Bangaru Tirumala in his turn called in the aid of the Marathas who had an interview with him shortly before they occupied Trichinopoly in 1740. Raghuji Bhonsle, the leader of this expedition, directed his lieutenant Murat Rao Ghorpade, who was now the governor of Trichinopoly, to place Bangaru on the nayak throne, but nothing came out of it. When Nizami-ul-mulk came down to Trichinopoly in 1743 Bangaru sought his assistance, but without avail. Anwar-ud-din Khan, who was in charge of the Arcot subah, was instructed by Nizam-ul-mulk to take kindly care of the fugitive nayak. The Pandyan chronicle says that the helpless man was poisoned, when he was residing at Arcot as the pensioner of the nawab. Bangaru's son retired into the wilds of Sivaganga and nothing more was heard of him.

⁷ According to the *Tuzuk-i-Walajahi* she immolated herself in fire.

DEVELOPMENTS AT TANJORE

After the death of raja Tukoji of Tanjore his eldest son, Bava Sahib, reigned for about a year and became the victim of a conspiracy, fomented possibly by Sayyid Khan, who was then the qiladar of the Tanjore fort. Bava Sahib's widow, Sujana Bai, was now raised to the throne by the ministers. She was soon confronted by a pretender known as Sawai Shahji (popularly called *Kuttu Raja*, i.e. forest ruler),⁸ who succeeded with the aid of Sayyid Khan in usurping the throne for a time. The pretender was in reality Sarabhoji's offspring by a slave woman, but he was passed off as the son of one of his wives. He was set up by one Koyanji Ghagte (Koyaji Kattigai) who alleged that he was the lawful heir to the throne and secured for him the aid, or promise of aid, of the English at Fort St David and of the Dutch at Negapatam.

Sujana Bai had ruled for about two years, when the pretender, Kuttu Raja, was admitted into the fort as ruler. The rani was put in prison and her principal supporters were impaled by Sayyid Khan. But the pretender was expelled after a short while; and Saiyaji, the rightful claimant, being a legitimate son of Tukoji, secured the throne. He had fled to Chidambaram and opened negotiations with the French governor, Dumas, offering to make over to the French the town of Karikal and some adjoining villages in return for help. Dumas agreed and sent two ships to take possession of Karikal and give the promised assistance. But Saiyaji soon won over Sayyid Khan who expelled the usurper, and enthroned Saiyaji (August 1738). Saiyaji saw the superfluity of French help, but wrote to Dumas intimating his willingness to cede Karikal, though not immediately. The French governor acquiesced, thinking that the time was not ripe to take any action, and withdrew the ships.

Chanda Sahib now resolved to use this incident to cement his friendship with the French and offered to capture Karikal for them with his own troops. Governor Dumas readily agreed; 4,000 men of Chanda Sahib under the command of Francisco Pereira, an adventurer wholly devoted to French interests, advanced on the place, forced the Tanjore army to retreat, and occupied the fort after a short bombardment. Its capture gratified Dumas who sent a warship with necessary stores to secure the place.

Saiyaji was now greatly frightened and sent envoys to Pondicherry to treat with the governor, explaining that his conduct was due to the bad advice of the Dutch at Negapatam, and assuring that he would carry out all his promises. But before he could do so, he was

⁸ These names occur in the Marathi inscription in the Big Temple at Tanjore.

ousted by a palace revolution; Pratap Singh, his half-brother who succeeded to the throne,⁹ promptly ratified the grant of Karikal to the French.

The new ruler found that the kingdom had not fully recovered from the confusion caused by dynastic revolutions. He was a shrewd judge of men and affairs, so that Orme called him 'the wily Tanjorean'. He removed the adventurer Sayyid Khan and appointed as his minister Dabir Pandit who subsequently became famous for his revenue regulations. He was also served by Manaji and Sakhaji, two clever and brave captains.

Pratap Singh's rule lasted till 1763. He maintained friendly correspondence with the Peshwas and benefited substantially from the great Maratha invasion of Karnatak in 1740. After the death of Dost Ali at the battle of Damalcheruwu pass Raghuji Bhonsle made peace with the new nawab, Saifdar Ali. He insisted that the Muslim attacks on Tanjore which had been frequent since 1732 should be stopped and that the lawful monarch Pratap Singh, who had been superseded by a Muslim deputy, should be restored. Pratap Singh had assisted the invading Marathas, along with the Hindu chiefs dependent upon Trichinopoly, on condition that the strategic place should not be left in Muslim hands.

The Marathas captured Trichinopoly and left it in charge of Murar Rao Ghorpade. Pratap Singh now feared that Shahu's suzerainty might be imposed on him. There was little love between Pratap Singh and Murar Rao, as a result of which an understanding developed between the latter and the French, while the Tanjore kingdom was subjected to relentless depredations at the hands of the Maratha adventurer. An English letter dated 16 April 1741 shows that the English were careful enough not to enter into any engagements with the Tanjore ruler for the supply of ammunition which he asked for.

When Nizam-ul-mulk proceeded to Arcot in March 1743 and settled the disturbed affairs of Karnatak, Murar Rao was ordered to quit Trichinopoly and Anwar-ud-din was appointed nawab of Arcot. The latter led two expeditions into the Tanjore country in 1744 and 1745 and contrived to exact from the raja not only a bond for seven lakhs of rupees but also some ready money in discharge of arrears of tribute. The later subjection of Tanjore to the depredations of Chanda Sahib

⁹ The order of succession of the rulers of Tanjore between Tukoji and Pratap Singh is difficult to ascertain. Different versions are given by Orme (I. 108), Mill (III, 62), Elias Caillot (the Dutch governor of Nagapatam) and the Tanjore inscription. See Dodwell's cautious opinion in *Private Diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai*, IV, 350-51.

and Muzaffar Jang in the winter of 1749-50 resulted only in protracted negotiations about the actual sums to be paid as blackmail and was not attended by serious fighting on either side.

The death of Shahu at Satara in December 1749 had remote repercussions at Tanjore. Chanda Sahib now thought of renewing active operations for capturing the Tanjore fort; he even planned to put his own son on the throne of Tanjore. But his mentor, Dupleix, who had a wider perspective of the situation, was apprehensive that such action on the part of Chanda Sahib might have serious repercussions on the war of succession for the subahdari of the Deccan which had already begun. The seizure of Tanjore by Chanda Sahib might provoke the Maratha chiefs like the peshwa, Fatch Singh Bhonsle, Raghaji Bhonsle, Sripat Rao and others to go over definitely to the side of Nasir Jang who was then on his march to Karnatak. So he advised Chanda Sahib against that course of action and ordered the French captain who had accompanied him not to allow Tanjore to be plundered. But this apprehension proved to be baseless. Far from the Maratha chiefs taking any offence at Chanda Sahib's expedition against Tanjore, they were busy at home, engrossed in the domestic revolution that followed the death of Shahu. Balaji Baji Rao's position was shaky till the late monsoon of 1750.

The important part played by Pratap Singh and his general, Manoji, in the operations round Trichinopoly and against Chanda Sahib in 1751-52 will be narrated in another place.

TRAVANCORE

At the beginning of the eighteenth century the Travancore state had not yet developed into any notable size or stability. Tirumala nayak of Madura had indeed included the raja of Nanjanad (South Travancore) among his foremost vassals. There were several invasions of Nanjanad by the Madura forces in the seventeenth century. The people of the region who had to bear the brunt of these depredations developed open discontent which ripened into active revolt against the ruler of Travancore.

The rule of Ravi Varma (1684-1718) was marked by the permission granted to the English to build a fort at Anjengo (1695) at which the great nobles of the land, the *pillaimars* and the *madampimars*, were angry, and justifiably too. It was from Anjengo that the English extended their political influence in Travancore and Cochin. It served as a depot for military stores during the Anglo-French wars and as the point from which the news from outward-bound ships reached Madras earliest.

Unni Kerala Varma (1718-24) succeeded Ravi Varma. The state was dominated by a turbulent aristocracy of whom the Ettuvittil *pillaimars* were the most prominent. The military resources of the state were scattered and not sufficient to put down the troubles. The raja had to remove his residence to Neyyattinkara in order to avoid falling a prey to their violence.

The 1721 there occurred the murder of the English factors at Anjengo and an attack was made on the fort itself which was bravely defended by Gunner Ince till relief came from Adams, the chief of Tellicherry. Two years later the English Company, under its chief Dr Alexander Orme, father of the famous historian Robert Orme, entered into a covenant with the chief of Neyyattinkara on behalf of the raja of Travancore.

Rama Varma; the next ruler of Travancore, with the advice and support of his nephew, Martanda Varma, resolved to break up the power of the *yogakkars* and the Ettuvittil *pillaimars*. He entered into a treaty with the nayak of Madura by which he acknowledged the latter's suzerainty and agreed to pay a small annual sum for the services of a body of cavalry and sepoys. But anarchy continued; and in 1728 the senior rani and her little son were waylaid and attacked by a party of insurgents.

With the reign of Rama Varma the early history of Travancore might be said to have ended. The limits of the state were marked by Attungal on the north and Nagercoil on the south. Surrounding the state lay several principalities including those of Quilon, Kottarakara, Ambalapuzha, Thekkumkur and Vadakkumkur. Further northward lay Cochin, very much weakened by incessant wars with Calicut and other principalities. The English had established themselves at Idava, Covalam and Vizhinjam, besides Anjengo.

It was during the reign of Martanda Varma, the maker of modern Travancore, that the state passed through a transformation in size, strength and character. Before his death in 1758 he established order, crushed the power of the Dutch, put down the turbulent chiefs, and made territorial annexations at the cost of the neighbouring states. He dedicated the state itself to the presiding deity, Sri Padmanabha of Trivandrum.

THE ENGLISH COMPANY

It is now necessary to turn to the European merchants in South India. The United Company of the English had become, under the award of Earl Godolphin, a consolidated and powerful organization (1709). With this union the English interests in India entered upon a fresh epoch of growth. The treaty of Utrecht and the years of

peace that followed it witnessed a great increase in the Company's trade and in the dividends paid to the shareholders. In 1712, on the petition of the Company, Parliament passed an Act extending its right of exclusive trade in the East to 1733 with the usual provision of a three years' notice. In 1716 the Company secured a royal proclamation against interlopers, some of whom now began to trade under commissions from foreign states. Three years later the proclamation was confirmed by an Act of Parliament. Yet another Act, passed in 1721, empowered the Company to seize English merchants trading in India under licence from foreign states and to deport them home.

In 1726 the United Company got from king George I a new charter with ampler powers. About 1730 a band of capitalists petitioned Parliament against the renewal of its monopoly and proposed the starting of a new company which would throw open the India trade to all Englishmen. Parliament, however, rejected this petition, mainly through the influence of the prime minister, Sir Robert Walpole. At the same time Parliament extended the term of the Company's charter with the usual stipulation of three years' notice. Of course the Company had to pay heavily for the continuance of its monopoly; but its trade was flourishing and its dividends remained as attractive as before.

About 1742 the British government was much pressed for money to prosecute the War of Austrian Succession into which it had entered. The Company discreetly offered to lend one million sterling at 3 per cent on condition that its monopoly should terminate only by 1780, after a three years' notice, and that even on such notice, only its exclusive right of trade should cease but not its existence as a trading body.

THE OSTEND COMPANY

The United Company had, meanwhile, become anxious at the foundation of the Ostend Company under the authority of the Austrian emperor Charles VI at the Belgian port Ostend. In 1717 the Ostend Company sent two ships to India and despatched more vessels in the following years. The English and the Dutch Companies protested against their new rival, particularly as many renegade Dutch and English sailors and merchants took service with the new Company, whose initial prosperity induced the emperor to formally endow it with a Charter (1722). But after 1726 political difficulties blocked its path, for the emperor was abandoned by his only ally, the king of Spain, and was opposed by a triple alliance of France, England and Holland. To satisfy those powers and to get their consent for the Pragmatic Sanction (i.e. the guarantee of the

succession, to his hereditary Habsburg dominions, of its daughter and only child, Maria Theresa) the emperor sacrificed his eastern venture, suspended the activities of the Ostend Company for seven years in 1727, and four years later, bound himself by a treaty with Great Britain to suppress it altogether.

The Ostend Company figured more largely in European politics than in India. But during its brief span of life it managed to send a number of vessels to India and pay good dividends to its shareholders. Though it practically died out by 1730, it became legally extinct only in 1739. Its settlement at Banki Bazar was destroyed by the nawab of Bengal in 1733 at the instigation of the Dutch and the English. The factory of Covelong, a little to the south of Madras, struggled for a few years longer. The English afterwards perceived that they should have allowed the Ostenders a share in the India trade, as the latter would have acted as a counterpoise to the Dutch and the French Companies.

THE ENGLISH AT MADRAS

Adverting to the growth of the three English presidencies in this period, Madras was fortunate in its governors from Thomas Pitt (1698-1709) onwards. We may note Gulstone Addison (1709), a brother of Joseph Addison, the famous essayist, and Edward Harrison (1711-17) who became subsequently the chairman of the directors and was the father-in-law of Viscount Townshend. In 1693 the boundaries of Madras had been extended by the grant of three villages. Five more were added in the days of Pitt, but these were resumed by the Mughal officials in 1711. There were continuous disputes with the nawab of Karnatak regarding the grant of the 'five New Villages'; not until the grant of the emperor Farrukh-siyar was obtained for them by John Surman could the matter be finally settled. The Madras farman secured by Surman's embassy gave the Company exemption from customs in all ports of the subah of Golconda as also possession of the five villages. At the subordinate settlement of Fort St David there were several troubles, one of them due to the insubordination of Robert Raworth, its deputy governor. Regular overland postal service to Bengal was arranged at a comparatively cheap rate by governor Harrison by means of running messengers (*cossids* or *pattamars*), the covenanted servants of the Company being exempt from payment for their letters. Block-houses or batteries were built on the outskirts of the suburbs of the Black Town. Under governor Collet (1717-20) a body of weavers and painters were encouraged to settle in a new suburban village known as Colletpettah. Likewise, numbers

of weavers, washers and painters needed for the cloth trade were settled in several other suburban villages. Armenian and Jewish merchants were in prominence at Madras at the time. The Jews were chiefly engaged in trade in diamonds and in coral; and a well-known Armenian merchant, Peter Uscan, was useful as a political agent of the presidency in the negotiations with Raghaji Bhonsle.

Under governor Macrae (1725-30) a royal charter issued by George I reconstituted the corporations of the presidencies and set up or remodelled the mayor's court and other courts. The mayor's court at Madras had been in existence from 1687 and was now reorganized with definite jurisdiction. The governor and the five senior members of the council were empowered to act as justices of the peace and to hold quarter sessions with jurisdiction over all offences except high treason. The president and council were to form a court of appeal from the mayor's court. There was also a lower court for the decision of petty civil causes.

Governor Morton Pitt (1730-35) instituted a fairly efficient system of policing for the Black Town. His successor, governor Richard Benyon (1735-44), witnessed the cessation of the humdrum routine of mercantile activity and the beginning of political ferment in the interior which reacted powerfully upon the fortunes of the European Companies on the east coast. He had to be very careful in the face of the threat from the Marathas and the general anarchy prevailing in the region. The invasion of Karnatak by the Marathas under Raghaji Bhonsle in 1740, the utter prostration of the authority of the nawab of Arcot, and the removal of Chanda Sahib to his Deccan prison were momentous in their consequences. The English sent presents to Raghaji Bhonsle through the Armenian, Peter Uscan, and in return secured *coules* for both Madras, and Fort St David (April 1741). Nawab Safdar Ali sent his young son and wife for safety to Madras where they were securely lodged in the Black Town. Safdar Ali himself paid several visits to Madras in the course of his short rule. When the unfortunate nawab was assassinated at the instigation of Murtaza Ali, the qiladar of Vellore, the troops proclaimed his young son to be the new nawab and when word was sent to Madras to the boy-prince, he was proclaimed to be the 'Subah' (*i.e.* subahdar) of Karnatak with due pomp and ceremony at the Company's Garden House in December 1742. The young nawab recompensed the English handsomely for the hospitality they showed him by a grant of villages and the right to coin Arcot rupees at their mint at Madras (4 November 1742).

ber 1742).¹⁰ Thus Madras secured the third batch of suburban villages and the much-coveted privilege of coinage.

The governorship of Richard Benyon was marked by the further fortification of Fort St George, which was now surrounded by a regular rampart, equipped with batteries and points. If the plans for further extension of the fort had been executed, it would probably not have easily capitulated to the French in 1746.

Governor Richard Morse succeeded Beyon in 1744. He found himself in a difficult position on account of the negotiations with the nawab of Arcot and with Dupleix, the French governor of Pondicherry, which were begun after news of the war with France reached the coast in September 1744.

THE ENGLISH IN BENGAL

In Calcutta the English had already begun to strengthen the fort and build new bastions by the riverside. During the War of the Spanish Succession there were frequent rumours that the French would attack English ships on the Hughli, and in the Bay, but nothing actually happened. Murshid Quli Khan, the nawab of Bengal, grew jealous of the trade and prosperity of the English and held it to be unjust that they should have the right to trade duty-free or for a small consideration while his own subjects were denied these privileges. He perceived the contingent danger from the chain of English factories extending from Patna to Dacca. So he annulled in 1713 all the privileges of the English and ordered that they should thereafter pay the same duties and customs as the local merchants. To protect the Company's privileges the governor Robert Hedges, one of its old and tried servants, sent an embassy to the emperor Farrukh-siyar, under John Surman, and accompanied by surgeon William Hamilton. The embassy carried instructions from Madras and Bombay concerning their own privileges. After the usual delay the required farmans were granted and the embassy was allowed to return to Calcutta.¹¹

Farrukh-siyar granted the English freedom of trade in return for a yearly *peshkash* of Rs 3,000, confirmed the purchase of the zamin-

10 Since the starting of the mint at Madras it struck the famous Star *pagodas* which remained the standard currency of South India till 1818. About 1745 the Madras mint coined 'Star pagodas, Madras pagodas, Madras gold mohurs and Arcot rupees in silver besides the coins of smaller denominations under each standard'. The pagoda was exchanged for eight shillings sterling, though the Company's servants were paid their salaries in sterling at nine shillings to the pagoda. The pagoda exchanged for three rupees between Madras and Bengal.

11 Diary of Surman and Stephenson, Part II. C. R. Wilson, *Early Annals of the English in Bengal*, II.

dari rights in the three *dhatis* of Calcutta, Sutanuti and Govindapur, sanctioned the purchase of similar rights in 38 other villages in the vicinity, exempted Madras rupees from discount, and forbade the masters of seaports from seizing the cargoes of wrecked ships and demanding a quarter part of the salvage. The results of Surman's embassy were that it placed the nawab technically in the wrong so long as the farman and the orders of the emperor were disregarded. The English, therefore, had always at hand a standing quarrel which they might take up at any time. This quarrel they took up seriously only when Clive broke with Siraj-ud-daulah and accused him and his predecessors of withholding the rights won by Surman.

While the trade of the Company was, on the whole, satisfactory, side by side its servants also carried on private trade on a very large scale. This private trade was allowed by the Company, but was limited to India, and in the case of Europe, to a few articles such as precious stones. Much of the coasting traffic in India was gradually absorbed by the Company's servants who used for this purpose such ships of their masters as lay idle in the ports.

The directors suggested large schemes for the improvement and strengthening of Calcutta, which contained in 1735 a population of over one hundred thousand. They planned the digging of a great ditch all round the settlement and the building of new docks and warehouses. But until the capture of Calcutta by nawab Siraj-ud-daulah in 1756, its fort had no real strength or power of defence. The English were on good terms with the French at Chandernagar and the Dutch at Chinsura, though hostile to the Ostend Company's settlement of Banki Bazar. In 1733 they combined with the Dutch and persuaded nawab Shuja-ud-din to destroy that settlement.

Nawab Murshid Quli Khan was a vigorous and able ruler, but tyrannical and oppressive in his exactions both from the European traders and from the Hindu zamindars. On his death in 1727 his son-in-law Shuja-ud-din succeeded him. He was more favourably disposed towards the European settlements. His son and successor, Sarfaraz Khan, was killed in battle by the ambitious deputy governor of Bihar, Alivardi Khan, who ruled over Bengal, Bihar and Orissa from 1740 to 1756.

The repeated Maratha incursions into Bengal in the days of Alivardi Khan disturbed English trade, but provided an opportunity for strengthening the defences of Calcutta by digging what is known as the 'Maratha Ditch'. The nawab was reasonably lenient to the European trading nations and permitted them to enjoy their privileges. One of his generals, Mustapha Khan, attempted to persuade him to expel the English from Calcutta and seize their wealth. Alivardi

Khan significantly replied : "What have the English done against me that I should use them ill? It is now difficult to extinguish the fire on land; but should the sea be in flames, who can put them out? Never listen to such advice as this, for the result would probably be fatal."

THE ENGLISH AT BOMBAY

In Bombay a definite decline began for the English from almost the last decade of the seventeenth century. At that time the only other English settlements in western India were at Surat, Karwar, Telli-cherry, Calicut and Aujengo, which were mere factories. The safety of Bombay was endangered by the neighbouring island of Khanderi which was strongly fortified by the Angrias. The powerful Kanhoji Angria died in 1729; but his successors carried on his traditions and wantonly attacked and captured ships of all European powers—English, Dutch, Portuguese and French. After some time the power of the Angrias was weakened, by internal dissensions, while the Sidi fleet maintained by the Mughals practically disappeared. In 1739 the English concluded a treaty of friendship with the peshwa, who had just then conquered Bassein from the Portuguese. But after 1745 the Angria danger reappeared in all its virulence from Vijayadurg (Gheria). The new leader, Tulaji Angria, swept the whole sea from Cutch to Cochin, captured small sailing boats, cut off stragglers, and injured trade.

Between the years 1708 and 1756 the English at Bombay were successively freed from danger from everyone of their rivals. The Sidi fleet decayed; then Mughal authority over Gujarat and Surat disappeared. The growing power of the Maratha confederacy under the peshwas had not till then fully mastered the Konkan coast. Then the English gradually weakened the Angria power and finally destroyed it with the peshwa's co-operation in 1756.

THE FRENCH COMPANY

At the time of Martin's death (1708) the position of the French had greatly improved at Pondicherry. The town had grown in population as also in prosperity. The French received generous treatment at the courts of the local rulers, and Martin followed a tactical policy of reciprocity. In the commercial sphere he was able to earn the good will of the Indian merchants. Indeed, he laid the foundation of that 'intimate connection with native powers' which served French interest well in the days of Dupleix.

In marked contrast with the prosperity of Pondicherry, French

influence decayed everywhere else in India. Their factory at Surat was abandoned in 1714. The factory at Masulipatam was not flourishing. At Chandernagar on the Hughli in Bengal, the French never attempted to become anything more than small traders, although the neighbouring Dutch settlement at Chinsura and the English settlement at Calcutta both prospered and grew strong. It was not until Dupleix was appointed in 1731 as chief of Chandernagar that a vigorous attempt was made to infuse fresh life into French activities in Bengal. There were small French factories at Balasore (in Orissa) and Qasimbazar (in Bengal).

Eight years after the death of Martin the fifty years' monopoly of the French Company granted by Louis XIV in 1664 came to an end. For a number of years even before this, the Company had ceased to display any activity at all. In 1708 it found itself unable to send any vessel to India; four years later it gave up even the attempt and sold its trade rights to some French merchants in return for an annual payment. But weak and insolvent though it was, the Company applied in 1714 for a renewal of its charter and got a royal edict prolonging its life for ten years. It did not know to what use it could put this renewed lease, since it had absolutely no funds.

There appeared in Paris just at that moment a remarkable Scotsman, John Law by name, who boldly declared that he would pull France and her government out of the financial ruin into which they were then plunged. Among his schemes there was one which proposed to unite all the great French trading companies both in the East and in the West. The combined association was to be known as the Company of the Indies which would monopolise the trade of France with the East as well as the West. The French government heartily approved of Law's scheme and granted numerous privileges to the new Company. The shares of the Company went up in value by leaps and bounds; but, as usual in such cases, the crisis followed quickly. Confidence was shaken and the shares fell rapidly in value; there was a good deal of disorder and tumult. Out of this confusion the old East India Company emerged under the new name of The Perpetual Company of the Indies (1720). In 1723 the Company was constituted into a purely commercial association: two years later it was granted the tobacco monopoly. In all respects the new Company was placed upon the same footing as the original Company founded by Colbert in 1664.

The new Company was confident of its permanence and future. Even in the very year of its creation it sent three ships to Pondicherry with a large quantity of gold and silver. This circumstance greatly revived the drooping life of the French settlements in India. From

1723 the Company despatched vessels regularly to India; after 1726 trade made still greater progress. Lenoir, a shrewd and clever merchant who was governor of Pondicherry, knew that honesty was the main basis of ultimate success. The cargoes and the bullion that he received were used for the repayment of French debts due to Indian traders. This was an excellent method of maintaining French credit.

Lenoir was governor of Pondicherry for the first time in 1720 and again for nine years from 1726 to 1735. Under him trade prospered, the town of Pondicherry was enlarged and its Indian population multiplied. He was succeeded by Benoist Dumas who was till then governor of Mauritius and Bourbon. Dumas was an experienced servant of the Company; he was "a shrewd, calculating and prudent man—one not given to risk much without having in view a very tangible result; brave, resolute, jealous of the honour of France, thoroughly acquainted with native ways, holding fast by the traditions of Martin, a lover of peace, and anxious above all to extend the French territories in India by smooth means".

It was during the time of Dumas that Karikal was acquired by the French and the bonds of friendship between them and the nawabs of Arcot were closely knit. During the Maratha invasion of 1740 both Safdar Ali and Chanda Sahib removed their families and valuables to Pondicherry where Dumas welcomed and hospitably entertained the fugitives. Dumas knew that his action in sheltering them would bring down upon him the wrath of the Marathas; indeed, they advanced threateningly upon Pondicherry, after pillaging Porto Novo and Cuddalore which were situated lower down the coast. But he was convinced that "in the hour of imminent peril, it should fall in the lot of France to afford protection to those who unquestionably would, on the retirement of the Marathas, recover supreme power in the Carnatic". He showed a bold front to the Maratha envoys who came to Pondicherry and sent a few bottles of French wine to Raghuji Bhonsle. The latter retired from Pondicherry without any further demonstration. Congratulatory messages were sent to Dumas by Safdar Ali and Nizam-ul-mulk. Even the emperor of Delhi conferred on him the personal title of nawab and the rank of mansabdar of 4,500 horse. These honours impressed the people very much; and Dumas contrived that they should also descend to his successors in office.

Joseph Francois Dupleix, the chief of Chandernagar, succeeded Dumas in the governorship of Pondicherry in October 1741. Born in 1697, he was intended for a commercial career, sent out to the sea, and finally appointed to a high post at Pondicherry in 1720. He embarked on private trade and amassed considerable fortune in a

short time. For four years (1726-30) he was under a cloud and out of employment. Then he became the intendant of Chandernagar where things had been growing bad; and he succeeded in converting the half-decayed place into a prosperous and flourishing town.

At Pondicherry Dupleix took prompt measures to improve the defences and to relieve the population from the effects of the recent Maratha invasion and a famine. He publicly assumed the Mughal honours and titles that had been conferred on his predecessor, checked extravagance and the evil practices of Europeans such as taking *douceurs* and bribes from Indian merchants and others, and began to fortify the settlement on the sea-side. The pomp and state which he assumed impressed the people in the manner which, as his experience had proved, was best calculated to gain their esteem. He sedulously cultivated the friendship of nawab Anwar-ud-din.

VICISSITUDES IN KARNATAK

In May 1740 it was reported that an advance body of Maratha cavalry had proceeded against Cuddapah, worsted its nawab, Abdul Nabi Khan, and moved in the direction of Damalcheruvu pass. Nawab Dost Ali marched with all available troops to meet the enemy, sending his family to Pondicherry for security. Wilks says that Safdar Ali and Mir Asad, the diwan, were jealous of the power of Chanda Sahib and had secretly instigated the Marathas to invade the province. The defeat and death of Dost Ali, along with his son, Hasan Ali, at the battle of Damalcheruvu pass (May 1740) frustrated their schemes. They had expected that the nawab would shut himself up in a fort; the invaders would bypass him according to previous understanding, make a pretended attack on Safdar Ali and Chanda Sahib, and leave the former free. Safdar Ali had advanced as far as Arcot; but when he heard the news of his father's defeat and death he immediately shut himself up in Vellore and tried to negotiate with the Marathas through Mir Asad, who had fallen into their hands in the battle. The Marathas quickly perceived that any price might now be exacted from Safdar Ali by the simple threat of selling themselves to Chanda Sahib. They recognized Safdar Ali as nawab (August 1740) after securing from him a secret treaty by which they undertook to evacuate Karnatak but were to get a large portion of the districts in possession of Chanda Sahib as the price of his effectual removal.

When the bulk of the Maratha army had quitted Karnatak, Chanda Sahib, being deceived by appearances, sold off the provisions that he had accumulated at Trichinopoly on the first rumours of invasion. But he could not long be lulled into a sense of security. In November

1740 the Marathas again became aggressive. They swooped down on Tiruvannamalai, captured Porto Novo, raiding the Dutch factory at the place, pillaged the town of Tiruppapuliyur adjoining Fort St David, and advanced up the coast to the neighbourhood of Madras where they were repulsed. Chanda Sahib was attacked at Trichinopoly, which he surrendered after a short siege on 13 March 1741. Unable to pay the ransom that was demanded by the Marathas, he was carried off prisoner to Satara.¹²

The Maratha invasion left Karnatak in a state of complete disorganization. Raghaji Bhonsle left Murar Rao in charge of Trichinopoly. Saldar Ali's rule (1740-42) was weak and inefficient.¹³ He had obtained confirmation of his appointment from Nizam-ul-mulk in return for a heavy payment and appointed Mir Asad as his diwan. Murtaza Ali Khan of Vellore took advantage of his inefficiency and schemed to supplant him. He contrived to have Safdar Ali assassinated when the latter visited Vellore though Mir Asad was spared. Ten days later Murtaza Ali proclaimed himself nawab at Arcot, but the army was dissatisfied and Murar Rao and the Marathas sided with the family of the murdered nawab. Murtaza Ali had to return for safety to Vellore. Some notables complained to the nizam deplored the confusion at Arcot and requesting that the elder of the two young sons of Saldar Ali be nominated for succession.¹⁴ The army proclaimed in favour of the elder prince, Muhammad Sayyid Khan.

Nizam-ul-mulk proceeded to Karnatak with a big army early in 1743 to remove the abuses that had crept into the administration. He first settled the affairs of Kurnool where the refractory Pathan nawab, Himmat Khan, had been persistently withholding tribute, and then proceeded to Arcot where he received the oath of allegiance from the boy prince, whom he entrusted to the charge of his own officers (March 1743). His next step was the siege of Trichinopoly. After six months of desultory operations Trichinopoly was evacuated by Murar Rao. The nizam returned to Arcot leaving Khwaja Abdullah Khan, who had already been put in charge of the subah of Arcot, to re-establish Mughal authority. He himself stayed on in Karnatak till the end of March 1744; and the English at Madras and the French at Pondicherry vied with each other to solicit his favour with presents and congratulatory embassies. The immediate object of the English was to get a confirmation of the right of coining money.

¹² Madras Council's Despatch to Court of Directors, 25 September 1741.

¹³ Despatch of Pondicherry Council to French Company, 1 October 1741.

¹⁴ Succession of the Nabobs in the Carnatic Province since the year 1710, Orme Ms. H. D. Love, *Vestiges of Old Madras*, II, 284.

as also of the land grants made by the minor nawab at the time of his father's death when he and his mother were living under English protection at Madras.

When Nizam-ul-mulk left Arcot for Hyderabad in April 1744 he formally appointed Khwaja Abdullah Khan as the nazim of Karnatak payanghat; but the Khan died on the very night of his appointment. It is believed that he was poisoned by nawab Anwar-ud-din and the willy Murtaza Ali Khan. The nizam now appointed Anwar-ud-din to the nizamat, and the latter proceeded to Arcot and took charge of his office (April 1744).¹⁵ The minor prince was specially entrusted to his care.

Soon after the nizam's departure, however, the prince was killed by Afghan mercenaries on the occasion of a marriage festivity (June 1744). It was believed that the murder was due to the perfidy of Murtaza Ali Khan. Anwar-ud-din Khan was also suspected of having had a hand in the affair.¹⁶ In order to clear his character he wrote to the nizam trying to exculpate himself from any possible suspicion of connivance. He also dismissed all the Afghan mercenaries from service and drove them away from Arcot. As the nizam did not care to complicate the situation by recognizing the claims of the surviving son of Saldar Ali, Anwar-ud-din was formally recognized as the nawab of Karnatak. The old nawayat family was thus completely deprived of all chances of regaining power in Karnatak.

The new nawab maintained a dignified court and recovered arrears of tribute due from Pratap Singh of Tanjore. He was, however, a stranger to the European settlements of the coast. He was not familiar with the conditions of the local chiefs and poligars. It appears from the statements of trustworthy writers that his administration was neither efficient nor popular.¹⁷

15 Anwar-ud-din had distinguished himself in the nizam's service. He was appointed fanjdar of Ellore and Rajahmundry after the defeat and death of Mubariz Khan in 1724. He had become conversant with the politics of the Deccan and Karnatak, having spent about sixteen years in the country.

16 The Tamil chronicler, Narayana, says that the murder was attributed by some to the 'dark perfidy' of Anwar-ud-din, by others to an unknown cause, and by some others to the intrigues and treachery of Murtaza Ali Khan. A letter from Fort St George to the Company, dated 5 September 1744, absolved Anwar-ud-din from any share in the guilt. Wilks had the evidence of a personal attendant of the murdered prince that general suspicion fixed itself on Murtaza Ali and Anwar-ud-din.

17 Paupaya Brahmin of Madras, known as Purnaya the younger, who prepared a manuscript history of Karnatak in 1749 (Orme MSS., India, vols. I, 51), wrote that Anwar-ud-din Khan, his sons and ministers, by their administration of the country proved to be the most spiritless, covetous, severe and unjust among all the late governors of Karnatak.

FIRST ANGLO-FRENCH WAR

A few days after the news of the declaration of war between England and France was received on the coast Anwar-ud-din visited Pondicherry. He then proceeded to Fort St David and thence to Udayarpalayam. He had previously written to the Madras Council forbidding hostilities with the French. This order was repeated in a second letter which was received at Madras on 14 July 1745.

The ambiguous position that the two Companies occupied in their mutual relations may be noted here. The growth of Pondicherry in trade and prosperity in the years 1720-40 fanned the jealousy of the English against the French. On the west coast the rival settlements of Mahe and Tellicherry were equally involved in mutual suspicions and bickerings. In the years 1736-37 the English felt that the French were their most dangerous rivals. In 1744, when it was deemed to be likely that France would take the side of Spain against England, the problem of Anglo-French relations in the East Indies became complicated. It was believed on the one side that the war would give a chance for destroying the trade of rivals; but on the other side it was argued that the trading companies should not mutually injure each other and that their fortresses and military resources should be utilized only against Indian princes.

La Bourdonnais, the governor of Bourbon and Mauritius, where ships could be built or refitted and the Creoles and the Kafri slaves from Madagascar could be recruited for manning them, was anxious to secure a squadron from the French ministry and attack English trade in the Indian Ocean. But in India, on the Coromandel coast, where Pondicherry had no harbour and lacked facilities for fitting out or manning privateers, Dupleix was anxious to observe neutrality and had recommended it to the French Company. News of the declaration of war in Europe reached Madras on 16 September 1744. Dupleix directed the council of Mahe to observe peaceful relations with Tellicherry and wrote to the same effect to the English council at Madras. A temporizing reply followed. On receipt of subsequent instructions from Paris he formally proposed to Madras a mutual attitude of neutrality. The reply was that the English councils in India were not authorized to enter into any agreement.

Not that Madras was better fortified than Pondicherry. The English Company had been urging the British government for some time to help it with a squadron and had secured for the East India ships letters of *marque* and reprisal. In May 1744 a naval squadron under Commodore Barnett set sail and quickly swept the French shipping in the Indian waters, including a number of country ships;

which involved the French in serious loss. Dupleix wrote to La Bourdonnais to come to his assistance with a squadron, and also to the nawab of Arcot for enforcing neutrality on the English. After issuing his letter to the English in March 1745 the nawab granted Mughal colours and passes to French ships which were thus enabled to trade as freely as before the arrival of Barnett. But the English did not agree to respect this technical immunity of the French ships. Yet another letter was issued from the nawab's court forbidding the English to attack Pondicherry, to which governor Morse replied that he would not be the first to disobey the nawab's commands in this respect, provided the same deference was paid to them by the French. But the English squadron tried to blockade Pondicherry and Dupleix threatened Fort St David.

Meanwhile La Bourdonnais had managed to fit out a squadron and sailed. He sighted the Coromandel coast towards the end of July 1746 and met the English fleet under Peyton, who had succeeded Barnett, in an indecisive encounter off Negapatam. Though the English ships did not suffer so much as the French, Peyton made for Trincomali to repair the damages he had sustained. La Bourdonnais reached Pondicherry, where Dupleix's jealousy and impatience of him were openly manifested in the ceremonial of reception. In August La Bourdonnais encountered the English squadron sailing to the north of Nagapatam. But Peyton refused action, thinking that the French ships had a much heavier complement of guns. He quickly made for Pulicat where he received the news that Madras was threatened by the French squadron. He consulted his officers and quickly sailed for Bengal, though the Madras council had sent a sloop, a little too late, urging him to come to their assistance.

La Bourdonnais longed to attack Madras, but was not willing to shoulder the responsibility for a possible failure, and was anxious to get Dupleix and his council to invite him to undertake the enterprise. But Dupleix was equally anxious to avoid responsibility and called upon him either to pursue the English squadron or attack Madras at his discretion. The inaction of Peyton emboldened La Bourdonnais to disembark at Madras on 7 September and to open fire from batteries erected on the west and south of the fort. After two days of fitful firing the English garrison surrendered to La Bourdonnais just when he received news of the sighting of four ships which, he feared, might be English and with the help of which Peyton might renew the attack on his fleet.

At the moment of victory the quarrel between La Bourdonnais and Dupleix took a serious turn. The former claimed independent command of Madras and called himself "Commandant by land and sea

on the North of the Coast". Dupleix and his council claimed the right to control all places in India flying the French flag, and proceeded to nominate a council to take charge of the captured English settlement. Each party adduced every possible argument except the real motive by which he was animated. La Bourdonnais, who possibly received a private present from the English, declared coolly that he had already pledged his word for a ransom, which was fixed at 11 lakhs of pagodas for the French Company and one lakh as private present for himself, and of which 88,000 pagodas had actually been delivered over to him in gold and diamonds. He concluded an agreement for the evacuation of Madras in January 1747 and sailed away soon after on the pretext that the north-east monsoon had begun in a violent tempest and damaged some of his ships. He left behind him 1200 of the men whom he had brought from the Islands and abandoned Madras into the hands of Dupleix, who promptly repudiated the agreement for ransom and treated the English at Madras as prisoners of war.

Matters were now complicated by the arrival of three ships which, according to the instructions of the Company, were to be at the disposal of Dupleix, but had been ordered by the ministry to be entrusted to La Bourdonnais. The latter, after getting the three ships, sailed for Achin, intending to return to the coast in the following January. But his own ships, already damaged by the tempest, could not make way against headwinds, and with these he departed for his own islands. This closed La Bourdonnais's Indian activity. Dupleix had behaved strangely. The aforesaid disputes "were rather illustrative of the faulty organisation of the French, than productive of important consequences".

The incidents connected with the fall of Madras brought the French into direct conflict with the nawab of Arcot who could not understand the detail of the quarrels between the two French leaders and judged that the whole affair was but a trick to cheat him out of Madras. When La Bourdonnais opened his attack on Madras Anwar-ud-din sent a messenger with the most urgent orders to Dupleix to stop it. The latter answered that Madras would be put, after capture, in the nawab's possession. This assurance was a 'hasty expedient' intended to deceive La Bourdonnais rather than to win over the nawab; but it enabled Dupleix to pretend that the subsequent hostilities with the nawab were due to the refusal of La Bourdonnais to hand over Madras to Anwar-ud-din.

After the departure of La Bourdonnais all the merchandise stores, bullion and ordnance found at Madras were removed to Pondicherry by Dupleix. Those Englishmen who refused to swear allegiance to

the French king were sent as prisoners to Pondicherry. Among them were governor Morse and Clive, then a raw writer. The Indian merchants of Madras refused to move on to Pondicherry, except a few Armenians who merely pretended to move but transferred their properties elsewhere. The Pondicherry council itself thus wrote to Paris : "All the methods we have employed—promises, threats, and confiscation—to induce the native merchants to come and dwell here have been fruitless. Most favourable conditions were annexed to their removal—the possession of all their property, and the most formal assurances of never being molested either in their trade or religion... But not one has come, save a few wretches neither rich, nor respectable... This obstinacy is in fact very humiliating to us."¹⁸ The diarist, Ananda Ranga Pillai, lamented that Madras was going to ruin under its incapable French governor, Duval d'Espremenil, and under the evil influence of Madame Dupleix¹⁹ who poked her nose into the affairs of the Madras merchants.

Anwar-ud-din did not accept the French occupation of Madras as final. He sent his eldest son, Mahfuz Khan, with a body of cavalry to occupy Mylapore and to prevent all ingress into Madras. Dupleix wrote to the nawab that his action was very surprising and that he would oppose his troops. Mahfuz Khan was defeated by Paradis on the banks of the Adyar river. Orme, Mill and Malleson have expressed exaggerated views about the importance of this incident. It proved, according to them, the absolute and overwhelming superiority of the disciplined European soldier. But Dodwell says that the emphasis should be placed not on the individual superiority of the Europeans, but on the 'value of that development of arms and tactics which had been introduced in the preceding eighty years'. The infantry, in which every man was armed with musket and bayonet, became more effective than ever before. Artillery had also improved. The Indian cavalry had now no chance of successfully charging a body of steady infantry, which had become capable of taking the offensive without being overwhelmed by mere numbers.²⁰

This victory emboldened Dupleix to proceed to the capture of

18 Pondicherry Council to Company, 30 November 1747.

19 While Dupleix was at Chandernagar he married Madame Vincens, a lady of great mental vigour and personal ambition, who was acquainted with Indian languages. Her "counsels and energy sustained her husband in all his trials". She entered into delicate negotiations with Indian rulers and acted as Dupleix's "minister of foreign affairs". Ananda Ranga Pillai gives a very unfavourable picture of her activities. (*Diary*, III, Introduction). See Y. K. Gaevele, *Creole et Grand Dame, Johanna Begum, Marquise Dupleix*.

20 Dodwell, *Dupleix and Clive*, 20-21.

Fort St David, where the European garrison was weak; but Muhammad Ali, a younger brother of Mahfuz Khan, was now ravaging the neighbourhood of Pondicherry. In December 1746 Dupleix launched an attack on the fort of Cuddalore; but he found that the Muslim troops supported by the English were too much for him. He began negotiations with the nawab, gave him presents, and consented to fly the Mughal flag over Madras for a week. But scarcely was the understanding with the nawab arrived at, when news reached that an English squadron was on its way to the coast. An attack on Fort St David that he had just launched ended in hasty retirement. The new English squadron was, however, numerically weak. Its commander, Commodore Griffin, decided that any direct attack on Pondicherry was out of the question and that he could only blockade it and thus keep Duplex inactive. The monsoon season of 1747 thus saw a lull in operations, with the English squadron keeping watch over Fort St David; while Dupleix unwillingly recognized the superior constancy of the English sailors. In January 1748 Dupleix undertook in person the command of the third expedition against Fort St David; but it fared no better than the previous ones, since Griffin promptly appeared on the coast and compelled him to retire to Pondicherry.

Both the English and the French governments now sent out considerable reinforcements. In February 1748 Griffin was joined by three men of war and got news that a large expedition was being organized. At the same time Major Lawrence took command of the Fort St David garrison and markedly improved the discipline and tone of the English forces. The French fleet that had been despatched reached the coast in June, after several mishaps. Since it carried much treasure, it dared not land the treasure chests at Pondicherry, nor risk an action with the English fleet lying in the roads of Fort St David. The fruitless chase of Griffin after the French fleet, which contrived to land its treasure at Madras, left Fort St David unprotected for the moment. Dupleix launched his fourth attack on the place. But though the garrison was still weak, Lawrence's energy and skill beat off the French attempt at an escalade and drove the French troops back.

A powerful English squadron under Boscawen, with directions for reducing Mauritius, Pondicherry, Chandernagar and other French settlements, reached the Islands in the beginning of July and arrived at Fort St David early in August. Boscawen's object was to reduce Pondicherry before the rains should set in. But the English fleet was delayed for some time and Dupleix had time to strengthen Pondicherry. The result was that the English attack on

it failed both by land and sea. The failure was due (as Clive wrote to Orme) to the ignorance of the engineers and to the faulty positions that the English took up. Ananda Ranga Pillai rejoiced that "God alone could have made the English to choose such a position", while the bombardment from the ships made a 'prodigious noise, some alarm, but little damage'. Boscawen had to raise the siege and his losses from sickness were heavy; the losses on the other side were trivial, though captain Paradis was killed in a sortie.

A couple of months later news arrived that preliminaries for peace had been signed in Europe, just when Dupleix, elated by his recent success, had begun to plan another attack on Fort St David. There was a mutual exchange of prisoners and places taken in the war. The English got back Madras.

SECOND ANGLO-FRENCH WAR

The close of the Anglo-French War did not usher in an era of peace in Karnatak. The death of Nizam-ul-mulk early in June 1748, just previous to the arrival of Boscawen's fleet, roused into activity all the smouldering intrigues and plots which had continuously hedged in nawab Anwar-ud-din and weakened his rule. As if to add to the confusion, news came that Chanda Sahib had reached the Krishna with a large body of troops.²¹

Nasir Jang, the second son of Nizam-ul-mulk, was alarmed as to the prospects of his own succession to the subahdari of the Deccan. Murtaza Ali Khan prepared to take advantage of the confusion and seize Arcot. Muhammad Ali was ordered by his father to return from Timmeyelly where he was encamped and to strengthen the garrisons at Trichinopoly and Madura. Anwar-ud-din was suffering from lack of funds as also from the never-ceasing troubles given by the qiladars and poligars. Chanda Sahib did not actually reach Karnatak till the middle of 1749; but as his arrival was expected soon, Dupleix's attitude became friendly to his relations at Pondicherry. In these critical months of 1749 Anwar-ud-din sent his family for safety to the Trichinopoly fort and organized his resources.

Early in July 1749 Chanda Sahib crossed the Krishna with a large body of horsemen. Murtaza Ali proposed to him that he should receive Trichinopoly and his son Abid Sahib should get Jinji, while

²¹ Chanda Sahib is said by Cultru to have been released from Maratha captivity in 1745 without any French intervention; but both the Pondicherry council and Ananda Ranga Pillai bear testimony to his captivity during 1746 and 1747. Wilks says, probably on the authority of Orme, that Chanda Sahib departed from Satara early in 1748. See Dodwell, *Dupleix and Clive*, 32-36.

he himself should be left in undisturbed possession of Vellore. Anwar-ud-din wrote to Pondicherry that Chanda Sahib's son should not be allowed to remain at Pondicherry. While preparing to meet Chanda Sahib's onslaught, the nawab also sought the favour of Muzaffar Jang, Nasir Jang's nephew and rival, by writing to him a conciliatory letter. Chanda Sahib had planned to settle with numerous qiladars of Karnatak, many of whom were nawayats. Raja Sahib joined his father at the foot of the Ghats with 2,000 sepoys and a body of European volunteers under d'Auteuil.

Towards the end of July Chanda Sahib and Muzaffar Jang were about 18 hours' journey to the northward of Arcot; then they reached Pallikonda, half way between Ambur and Vallore. A battle took place at Ambur on 3 August 1749. This place did not lie on the invading army's route. Dodwell has raised the question why Anwar-ud-din should have taken his post at Ambur or why Chanda Sahib should have turned aside from Arcot. According to Burhan-ud-din, the jagirdar of Amburgarh, Husain Khan Tahir, treacherously persuaded Anwar-ud-din to encamp before his fort. The French troops bore the brunt of the fighting at Ambur. Anwar-ud-din was slain. His brother as also his elder son (Mahfuz Khan) were made prisoners; his second son (Muhammad Ali) fled to Trichinopoly.

After the victory, Chanda Sahib secured the support of several nawayat jagirdars and also the district of Nellore from which Abdul Wahab Khan had fled away. He liberated the prisoners including Mahtuz Khan and Najibullah Khan, the elder and younger brothers of Muhammad Ali, and demanded from the latter the immediate cession of Trichinopoly. Chanda Sahib was bent on securing a sufficient body of French auxiliaries for the expedition he had planned against Tanjore and Mysore. Muzaffar Jang was not reliable; Nasir Jang had begun his southward advance. Raghuji Bhonsle sent his son Janoji to join Nasir Jang. Dupleix despatched letters to the Maratha chiefs requesting them to maintain Chanda Sahib in the principality of Tanjore in his new position.

During the Tanjore operations of Chanda Sahib between December 1749 and March 1750 there were prolonged but infructuous negotiations about the sums to be paid as blackmail by the raja; there was not much active fighting on either side. Dupleix was anxious that Chanda Sahib and Muzaffar Jang should not make any terms with the ruler of Tanjore without his knowledge. Nasir Jang had meanwhile sent emissaries to offer peace terms to Muzaffar Jang. Dupleix suspected that the latter might cause some confusion in the camp of Chanda Sahib.

Nasir Jang reached the Chengammah pass in March 1750. Chanda

Sahib and his ally became alarmed and retreated in haste and confusion to Pondicherry, being harassed on the way by Murar Rao. Sate under the shelter of the French guns, the allies dunned Dupleix for money and evaded, meeting Nasir Jang in battle. The situation was worsened by a mutinous refusal of the French officers to continue in camp. Nasir Jang was meanwhile joined by Muhammad Ali. The latter procured the assistance of a small English detachment under Captain Cope, who was, however, recalled to St David's in August. Dupleix at once sent out reinforcements under d'Auteuil to attack Muhammad Ali. On 1 September he was completely routed with the loss of all his guns. His troops tried to reassemble under the walls of Jinji. Bussy, followed by d'Auteuil, arrived before Jinji on 11 September. The great fortress was carried by a daring escalade.²² Meanwhile Dupleix had recovered the factory at Yanam and the town of Masulipatam which had been seized by Nasir Jang's orders.

The capture of Jinji induced Nasir Jang to move south from his camp, but the monsoon rains in that year were unusually severe and compelled him, for want of fodder, and on account of floods, to stay on for a time in the neighbourhood of Villupuram without either advancing or retiring. The French could not also move freely from Jinji and give decisive battle to Nasir Jang's troops.

Unfortunately for Nasir Jang, there was treachery in his own camp. Muzaffar Jang, who had surrendered to him and was kept in easy captivity, had secret supporters, one of whom was Ramdas Pandit, 'the traitor Ramdas' as Grant Du^w calls him, the *peshkar* of Shah Nawaz Khan. The latter sympathized with the French but was opposed to the elevation of Muzaffar Jang. The Pathan nawabs of Cuddapah, Kurnool and Savanur were planning treachery against Nasir Jang. As early as April 1750 the English envoys wrote to Madras that a party opposed to Nasir Jang was being formed, which held the offer of English assistance in little esteem. By July the state of intrigue in Nasir Jang's court had worsened. The Pathan nawabs had become openly mutinous and Muzaffar Jang made a second attempt to escape from prison.

The plot against Nasir Jang quickly gathered momentum. The French troops from Jinji were to advance when his difficulties compelled him to renew his negotiations with Dupleix. D'Auteuil was to attack Salabat Jang's camp at an agreed moment and to take care not to injure the troops of the three treacherous Pathan nawabs, who had arranged to give the signal for attack. The signal was only given at

²² Dupleix did not want a regular siege of Jinji. He thought that it could be captured by the sepoys, but "the attack should be unexpected".

the very moment when Dupleix had assented to Nasir Jang's proposals and a letter had been written to inform d'Auteuil of the agreement. But already La Touche had begun his march against Nasir Jang's camp. In the early dawn of December 16 he broke into it; one of the nawabs shot Nasir Jang when he took up his position at the head of the troops.²³

Muzaffar Jang was raised to the *muznud* immediately after his uncle's death. He conferred on Dupleix the title of Zafar Jang, appointed him as his deputy in all the country south of the Krishna and made a grant to the French of Masulipatam and the Divi Island. As it was necessary that a French force should proceed to Golconda to secure Nasir Jang's treasure and to firmly establish Muzaffar Jang there before any party could rise against him, Bussy was chosen to command the French contingent.

LND OF CHANDA SAHIB

Muzaffar Jang, on departing for the north, appointed Chanda Sahib to the government of Arcot. While at Pondicherry, Muzaffar Jang and Chanda Sahib wrote to the English, demanding the restoration of posts in their hands like Devikottai. This sudden revolution alarmed the raja of Tanjore who now demanded English assistance according to a treaty that he had concluded with governor Foyer. Muhammad Ali, who had escaped to Trichinopoly, also preferred his claim for English support; but he negotiated with the French as well, as it was then the harvest season and the longer he could remain at peace with them, the greater were the chances of his collecting any revenue. He contrived to prolong negotiations with Dupleix and Chanda Sahib for four months (December 1750 to March 1751), but he regularly communicated to the English all his discussions with them. Governor Saunders contended that as Muhammad Ali had been appointed nawab of Arcot by Nasir Jang, he continued to be the legitimate and rightful ruler of Karnatak till another valid appointment was made from Delhi. The English had received regular farmans for the districts granted by Muhammad Ali. To safeguard their interests a detachment was sent to Trichinopoly under Captain Cope to secure it from attacks by Chanda Sahib; while another detachment was sent to assist the raja of Tanjore in consideration of a farman that he granted to them for Devikottai.

²³ There is a hiatus in the Diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai between 29 October 1750 and 16 April 1751, which probably represents, like other breaks, lost volumes. This portion would probably have given us much interesting information about the French negotiations with Nasir Jang and the circumstances under which the French attacked him.

Chanda Sahib and the French moved out from Pondicherry in March 1751, and proceeded to Arcot to realize tribute from the qiladars. He prepared to advance towards Trichinopoly towards the end of May, by which time Saunders had sent a force under Captain de Gingens to oppose his march.

Meanwhile Muzaffar Jang had met his end, and events had moved very fast. The Pathan nawabs resented the sudden turn of affairs. Pondicherry was now the political pivot of Karnatak. When Muzaffar Jang was encamped at Rayachoti (five days' march from Arcot, and in the dominion of the nawab of Cuddapah) the nawabs of Cuddapah and Kurnool complained that he was allowing the Marathas to plunder their country contrary to his promise, and that he had not rewarded them according to stipulations. They seized some French horses and spoiled the French ammunition. In the skirmish that ensued, the fire of the French artillery changed the fortunes of the day and forced the Pathan nawabs to retreat; but Muzaffar Jang, heedless of the advice of Bussy, pursued the fugitives and rode in advance of the French battalion, which, however, endeavoured to keep in sight of him. The nawab of Savanur died on the field, the nawab of Cuddapah was wounded and fled precipitately. In his pursuit of the latter, Muzaffar Jang came up to the nawab of Kurnool. He was pierced in the head by the javelin of his opponent who was overpowered and cut to pieces.

The unforeseen death of Muzaffar Jang caused the French much consternation, but Bussy did not lose his presence of mind. He assembled the chiefs and nobles and persuaded them to raise Salabat Jang, the eldest of the three brothers of Nasir Jang, who had been kept in close confinement, to the *musnud*. Salabat Jang confirmed all the cessions to the French made by his predecessor and granted additional villages round Masulipatam, as well as a large donation to the French contingent. As soon as Dupleix's approbation had been received, the Mughal army continued its march towards the Krishna. Beyond that river a large Maratha army was lying in wait for Salabat Jang. But he was able to effect an understanding with them through the mediation of Ramdas Pandit, and consented to give them a sanad for the chauth of the provinces of Golconda, Karnatak and Trichinopoly.

The settlement, not to speak of the pacification, of Karnatak by Chanda Sahib was a most difficult task. He made a settlement with Murtaza Ali Khan of Vellore and gave the fort and jagir of Arni to Shaikh Hasan, the sepoy leader who had accompanied him. Dupleix agreed to the lease of Tinnevelly country to Titarapa Mudali, who afterwards became the renter of the district under nawab Muhammad

Ali and the English. His chances of settling the country were not strong; moreover, he got a counter-offer from the *dubash* of governor Saunders, who promised to procure him a lease from Muhammad Ali. But the cause of Muhammad Ali was not yet to gain the upper hand. The Maravars attacked the troops of Captain Cope, who had advanced to Madura; but he broke them up. Muhammad Ali also gave out that he had already received from Ghazi-ud-din Khan, the eldest son and legitimate heir of Nizam-ul-mulk, a farman granting him both Balaghat and Payanghat Karnatak.

Dupleix was anxious that Chanda Sahib should proceed straight to Trichinopoly. On the way he found that the English under Gingens had taken Vriddhachalam as a sort of protection to Fort St David. The cavalry gave trouble. Paupaiya Pillai, one of Madame Dupleix's men who was appointed receiver-general of the finances of Karnatak, acted tyrannically. Even at this stage the English did not like to appear as principals in the struggle. Gingens was now reinforced by Captain Cope and a considerable body of cavalry and foot under Abdul Wahab Khan at Valikandapuram. The adjacent rock fort of Ranjangudi was under a jagirdar who was a Tahiran and an enemy of the clan of Anwar-ud-din. Gingens burnt the village, but could not take the rock fort; and in the action that followed, the English troops fled for no apparent reason, though the officers, including Clive who was then a lieutenant, did all they could, to stop the flight which was deemed a disgraceful affair by both Wilks and Malcolm.²⁴

Chanda Sahib followed Gingens to Uttatur after this action. Here also an engagement took place in which Gingens abandoned the 'Strengths of Uttatur', though he repulsed the attack of Chanda Sahib; and after a quick march he encamped close to the fortified pagoda of Bikshandarkoil. The English then crossed that river to the Srirangam pagoda; but here they did not deem themselves secure from the enemy. So they crossed the Kaveri and took their stand under the walls of Trichinopoly (28 July). The French also rapidly pushed on after the English, took possession of Srirangam, secured the mud fort

24 Orme says that Abdul Wahab Khan's troops stood their ground and only the English battalion got demoralized and broke up in panic. (For details see *Memoir of Captain Dalton*, 92 *et seq.*; Orme, I., 172-74; Martineau, *Dupleix*, III, 194; Forrest, *Life of Lord Clive*, I, 128-31. Forrest says that some of Orme's statements are based on a memorandum which Clive sent him in 1763. See Hill, *Catalogue of the Orme Collection of Mss.*, 272.

The troops of Muhammad Ali behaved in this action better than ever they did afterwards, and even in the field of battle reproached the English for their want of spirit, according to Clive's memorandum.

of Koiladi near the eastern extremity of the island, crossed the Kaveri and encamped on the plain to the east of the town.²⁵

On the other side it was suspected that Muhammad Ali did not repose full faith in the English. The French failed in an attack that they made on Vriddhachalam and when the news was received that the Tanjore ruler was inclined to the side of Muhammad Ali, they tried to secure Murar Rao's support. The English had to send reinforcements to Trichinopoly; and a commission was given to Clive to proceed with a detachment into the Tanjore country, where he was joined by another body of troops from Devikottai. By making a detour the English bypassed the French and gained access to Trichinopoly.

Muhammad Ali now urged on his English allies the plan of a diversion on Arcot that he had already communicated to the governor, even before Chanda Sahib started for Trichinopoly. He clearly indicated the political reaction of the proposed diversion in the following words: "As soon as our troops have begun (to make) incursions in the Arcot country it will hinder the enemy from receiving the revenues which will weaken them greatly; and they cannot divide their troops; in case they march with their whole army towards Arcot my troops shall pursue them jointly with yours and those of Mysore and Tanjore... If it happens that the enemy retreat and our troops pursue them, I shall then be able to collect money from different parts which will be a means to gain our ends. You will in no way neglect to disturb the Arcot country and take possession of the several districts. This may probably withdraw the enemy's troops from this (Trichinopoly) country."

Muhammad Ali had all along been of the view that if troops were despatched from Madras they could take possession of several places in the Arcot country and the enemy might be obliged to desist from marching to Trichinopoly. At first Saunders and his council thought that this end might be secured by Giugens leaving a sufficient number of men at Trichinopoly and marching with a detachment into the Arcot country. Only after the English reverses at Volconda and Uttatur, Saunders began to appreciate the value of the nawab's proposal. But even after some correspondence the governor had his

25 The date of the French and Chanda Sahib crossing the Coleroon is not certain. According to Orme (I, 180-81) Chanda Sahib and his allies took possession of Srirangam soon after it was evacuated by the English. Apparently, as the French, according to Law, did not cross the Coleroon till September, Chanda Sahib first crossed the Coleroon alone without the French and possibly withdrew when they refused to follow him. He was reported to be telling his people that his European allies had done nothing but talk big and write daily to Dupleix letters full of false complaints.

doubts. He wrote that though the English and the nawab's forces might be strong enough to keep Arcot, they would never be able to collect the revenues from the poligars without some of the Trichinopoly troops joining them, as the enemy was strong in cavalry, while they had none. It followed that even if they should be beaten, they could not be pursued; and so even the proposed diversion on Arcot might not divert Chanda Sahib from his enterprise in Trichinopoly. Actually, even after Arcot had been taken, its full significance was not perceived by Clive who proposed to abandon it and garrison himself in Timiri. Indeed, the credit for the initiative of the diversion to Arcot should go in a large measure to the nawab; but it was Clive who persuaded Saunders that he could capture Arcot when Gingens doubted his own capacity for the task.²⁶

The capture of Arcot (September 1751) did not make any impression on Pondicherry. Muhammad Ali Khan, a brother of Chanda Sahib, had to evacuate the Polur fort. Reinforcements were, however, promised from Pondicherry, where it was believed that the enemy could be easily driven out of the Arcot fort. Murtaza Ali Khan was also of the same opinion. Even when the siege was raised, Saunders did not seem to attach much value to the undisturbed possession of Arcot and the neighbouring forts of Timiri and Kaveripak.

Chanda Sahib complained of the behaviour of d'Anteuil who had left the allied camp in anger; and he wanted that Law should be appointed commander. Muhammad Ali asked for a twenty-day truce; but Dupleix suspected that this was merely a ruse to strengthen his position at Arcot and to collect provisions and stores needed for the defence of Trichinopoly. Meanwhile an agreement was entered into between the Mysore commander and Muhammed Ali. According to Kirmani, Nanja Raja associated himself with Murar Rao and other poligars and marched towards Trichinopoly with an army of 7,000 cavalry and over 10,000 foot. Dupleix was very much disgusted that Chanda Sahib had made enemies of the raias of Mysore and Tanjore and alienated the poligars who hindered all cultivation.

To return to the developments in the Arcot country. The details of the siege of Arcot and its defence by Clive are too tedious to recount, except that Murtaza Ali pretended to quarrel with Raza Sahib and Murar Rao threw in his lot with the English. After the siege was raised, Raza Sahib was driven to Chettinattu, while Conjeevaram was reduced and its garrison was forced to fly to Chingleput before the end of the year. Raza Sahib, however, plundered

²⁶ See C. S. Srinivasachari's article in *Proceedings of the All-India Modern History Congress*, Poona, 1935, Part II.

the Poonamalle and Mylapore districts and the Indian merchants of Madras ran away in fright for shelter to Sadras and Pulicat.

Clive's victory at Kaveripak, Lawrence's arrival from England and his assumption of the command, Chanda Sahib's retreat into Srirangam, the English blockade of the island, d'Auteuil's retreat to Uttatur and Clive's march on it—all these took place before the end of April 1752. D'Auteuil now retired to Valikandapuram, where he surrendered to Clive on 9 June. When Law and Chanda Sahib were blockaded at Srirangam temple, the latter offered a certain sum of money should he be smuggled out in the guise of a *faqir* and sent to Karikal. But he had to surrender to the Tanjore troops with the nawab. He was executed in Manoji Appa's camp on 14 June.²⁷ This incident has been differently interpreted. At a conference held in Lawrence's camp a proposal that the English should have custody of the prisoner was opposed by all the others. Manoji saw no way out to save the situation except by putting an end to Chanda Sahib's life. A further conference with Lawrence convinced him that the English did not intend to interfere any further in the matter. Orme is clear on the point that Lawrence had it in his power to have saved Chanda Sahib. The major wrote to Madras that "the Allies not agreeing who should have Chanda, to prevent disputes his head was cut off and carried into Trichinopoly".²⁸

SECOND ANGLO-FRENCH WAR CONTINUED

In July Muhammad Ali and the Mysoreans fell out on the question of the cession of Trichinopoly to the latter. The Mysoreans and the Marathas refused to march with the nawab, who could not join Lawrence in the proposed expedition for reducing Jinji, Chettupattu, Chingleput and Vellore. Srirangam was, by agreement, delivered to the Mysoreans who were outwardly reconciled to the nawab. According to Dalton, Murar Rao was not definitely on the English side, as he was negotiating with the French at Pondicherry, and was only planning to protract the operations and to draw large sums from the nawab as also from the Mysoreans who, in their turn, suspected that both the nawab and the Marathas were endeavouring to ruin them.²⁹

27 On 15 June Ananda Ranga Pillai heard the news that Chanda Sahib had been seized. The Madras Council Consultation of 3 June abstracts two letters from Clive. The first reports his having taken Volconoda (Valikandapuram); the second gives the news that Chanda Sahib was taken prisoner the night before. (Records of Fort St George, Diary and Consultation Book, 1752, Military Department, p 18).

28 Madras Council Consultation, 15 June 1752. See Dodwell, *Dupleix and Clive*, 66.

29 Dalton later on discovered a plot of the Mysoreans to get possession of the

About the same time Ghazi-ud-din Khan crossed the Narmada and reached Burhanpur and, being supported by Malhar Rao Holkar, occupied Aurangabad. Salabat Jang had been forced to sign an armistice with the Peshwa in January 1752; only Bussy was loyal and stood strongly by his side. Dupleix desired that should anything happen to Salabat Jang, Bussy should offer French support to his rival on condition of his renewing all the grants to the French. But just at this desperate moment, Ghazi-ud-din was poisoned evidently at the instigation of Salabat Jang, who immediately wrote to Muhammad Ali confirming him in the subah of Arcot. In December news was received at Pondicherry of a struggle between the Marathas and Salabat Jang who was forced to offer terms. Bussy visited the peshwa's camp and concluded peace, preferring solid peace to doubtful war.

The English victory at Bahur early September elated the spirit of Muhammad Ali. Dupleix's pompous reception of the so-called farman from the Padshah, in which he was addressed as captain and governor-general bahadur Zafar Jang, was merely a ruse to cover the seriousness of the situation. Clive's advance on Chingleput and the surrender of Covelong on a second attack rendered the French situation worse than ever.

The military situation round Pondicherry became so serious in October 1752 that Maratha horsemen advanced as far as the bound-hedge of the town: while the suburban villages were evacuated by their inhabitants who fled for shelter within the walls. Dupleix now revived his negotiations with the Mysore generals as also with Mu-rar Rao. The French intrigues with these two parties were known to the English.³⁰

In the first months of 1753, there were rumours that both the peshwa and Salabat Jang would send troops, jointly to take possession of Karnatak. Bussy had secured from the latter, after the treaty of Bhalki, the district of Kondavidu adjacent to Masulipatam. Raguhji Bhonsle began depredations in Salabat Jang's territories. Bussy

Trichinopoly fort by arming the French prisoners there. After Chanda Sahib's death Saunders wrote that Trichinopoly should be recognised as belonging to Muhammad Ali by right; but Dupleix demanded the release of all political prisoners as a preliminary to the discussion of terms. Saunders declined and the negotiations broke down. Dupleix was then stiffened by the knowledge of the expected reinforcements from France which were on the way.

³⁰ *Vide* letter of Captain Dalton from Trichinopoly, embodied in the Council Consultations of 17 August, and a subsequent letter quoted in the Council Consultations of 24 August, which complained that their behaviour was so inconsistent that it was evidently calculated to conceal their real intentions.

advised Salabat Jang to conciliate Raghuji by giving him several districts in the neighbourhood of Berar. This suggestion alienated some Mughal nobles from Bussy; and a serious illness compelled him to depart for Masulipatam. Savvid Lashkar Khan now weaned his master completely away from French influence, harassed the French troops at the capital by every means except open hostilities, and kept his master close to the peshwa. He also entered into correspondence with Saunders³¹ and was encouraged by the latter to persevere in his attempt. In July Bussv returned to Hyderabad owing to the pressure of Dupleix and contrived in spite of financial stringency to pay the arrears due to the sepoys. The only method of relief open to him was to obtain a grant of revenues which the French could collect for themselves. He resolved to get the grant of the northern sarkars (Chicacole, Rajahmundry, Ellore and Guntur) in addition to those of Masulipatam and Kondavidu already obtained. Bussv proceeded to Aurangabad where he soon came to terms with Savvid Lashkar Khan and obtained the grant of the aforesaid sarkars³² at a durbar held on 3 December. The grant was made to Bussv personally for the maintenance of French troops who were to have the charge of the nizam's person. The nizam was not to interfere in any manner in the affairs of Arcot, while all other affairs were to be conducted in concurrence with Bussv who should support and befriend Savvid Lashkar Khan in his office. The latter was alive to the danger of allowing the French possession of such a long tract of the east coast: he offered Bussv, in its place, a much larger area in the interior.

Dupleix was also intriguing with Murtaza Ali Khan. In December he came to a final agreement with Murar Rao. It was agreed that the latter should receive monthly 1½ lakhs of rupees and Dupleix should obtain for him the districts of Hoskote, Kolar, Gutti and Penukonda as also the ordinary jagirs of these four fortresses. Both were to share equally in the booty whether got in the field or in captured fortresses.³³

31 Vide Council Consultation, 10 July 1753

32 Even before Bussv's acquisition of the sarkars, Dupleix had been intriguing for the destruction of the English settlement with the agent of Vijaya Rama Raju of Vizianagram, the most powerful of the local renter-chieftains who had previously helped the English, when their factories at Vizagapatam and other ports were attacked by Jafar Ali Khan, the faujdar of Chicacole, at the order of Salabat Jang.

33 Martineau, *Dupleix et l'Inde Francaise*, III, 308-9. Martineau says that it was likely that it was intended to harass the enemy in the neighbourhood of Tiruvitii, Cuddalore and Porto Novo as the establishment of control of these regions should precede the march on Trichinopoly.

By the middle of January 1754 Murar Rao, accompanied by 500 Europeans and a number of sepoys, reached the vicinity of Tiruviti where he inflicted a reverse on Lawrence and interrupted his communications with Fort St David. The English were deficient in cavalry and vainly solicited the raja of Tanjore for help. There were desultory operations in February and March. On the first day of April a definite engagement took place in which Maratha horsemen made a dashing charge. Muhammad Ali and his bakshi, Muhammad Abrar Khan, were wounded. Bhujanga Rao, Murar Rao's brother, was killed, while Murar Rao himself had his horse shot under him. The English were now able to control the area with their mobile detachments. Lawrence left for Trichinopoly; Dupleix was unable to make him retrace his march. In May the Tiruviti fort was seized by the French; but the ravages of the Maratha horsemen rendered cultivation impossible.

The Mysore army had taken no part in the operations during and after the surrender of Chanda Sahib. Nanj Raja soon came to Trichinopoly. Muhammad Ali could not conceal from the English his secret agreement with him, though he declared that he had never intended to observe the compact. At the same time he tried to deceive the dalavai with fresh promise. The result was that the Mysore troops intercepted supplies to the fort, opened negotiations with Dupleix, and contrived their best to gain the place by treachery. The English victory at Bahur thwarted, for the time, being the intention of Nanj Raja to declare openly for the French. In December 1752 the Madras council thought it was high time to treat Nanj Raja as a declared enemy; and Captain Dalton made an assault on the Mysore troops encamped under the north wall of Srirangam. In the middle of February 1753 Nanj Raja was directed by his elder brother Deva Raja to join him, as the Marathas had advanced to Shirpi. He desired that the French and Murar Rao should combine to prevent the peshwa's further advance into the Mysore country.

The situation for the English did not improve. There was no co-operation between Captain Dalton, the commandant of the garrison at Trichinopoly, and Khair-ud-din Khan, the nawab's qiladar in charge of the fort. Muhammad Ali's march to Trichinopoly was prevented on the Coleroon by a body of Murar Rao's horsemen. The French soon captured several other forts which gave them control over the entire country to the north of the Coleroon. There was a general action outside Trichinopoly in which the French were

attacked by Lawrence and had to retreat to Nanj Raja's camp.³⁴ According to Orme, Trichinopoly was saved "by this success, which astonished even those who had gained it... for, as the city would have inevitably fallen if the English had remained inactive, so the loss of it would have been hastened only a few days, if they had been defeated".³⁵

Both Dupleix and Nanj Raja intrigued with Pratap Singh of Tanjore. They bribed the raja's chief minister, Sakkaji, who had secured the dismissal of his rival, Manoji. The latter had been of service to the English and the nawab. In February 1753 the raja recalled his cavalry and prevented it from joining the English at Tiruviti. The Mysoreans dissuaded him from supplying the English army at Trichinopoly with provisions. In July Palk, who was sent as envoy from Madras, prevailed on him to declare openly for the English and to order his men to join Lawrence who had proceeded to Tanjore. After the French defeat of 21 September, in which Lawrence himself was wounded and Astruc was taken prisoner, the enemy crossed into Srirangam island, and it was hoped that the dalavai would abandon completely the French alliance. In November an attempt at escalading the fort of Trichinopoly by a party of French soldiers, made without the knowledge of either Nanj Raja or Murar Rao, failed; what was worse, it resulted in the complete trapping of the escalading party. Burhan-ud-din attributes the credit of the victory to Khair-ud-din Khan. In December Dalton beat the Mysoreans under Srirangam, and the year 1753 ended with the deepest gloom at Pondicherry and in the mind of Dupleix. Apart from the military and political difficulties the financial situation was also desperate. The protests of the Europeans in Pondicherry against the high-handedness of Dupleix and his wife steadily increased.

The conference of English and French deputies that met at Sadras in January 1754 to adjust the claims of the English and Muhammad Ali against those of Salabat Jang and the French proved a failure. The French offered to recognize the grant of Poonamalle to the English and to make some provision for Muhammad Ali, provided the English recognized Salabat Jang and released all French prisoners in their hands. The English demanded, on their side, that Muhammad Ali should be recognized as the nawab.³⁶

³⁴ Lawrence's despatch to Madras, 27 June 1753.

³⁵ Orme, I. 293-94.

³⁶ The proposals of the deputies (Robert Palk and Henry Vansittart on the English side; Father Labour, d'Beausset and d'Kerjean on the French side) are given in R. C.

RECALL OF DUPLEX: TREATY OF PONDICHERRY

The French continued to blockade Trichinopoly and ravaged a part of Tanjore. But the Mysoreans were inactive and vacillating; and Murar Rao agreed to abandon the French alliance if he was granted three lakhs of rupees. On 1 August 1754 orders were received at Pondicherry for Dupleix's recall.³⁷ The French Company had sent one of their directors, Duvelaer, along with his brother, who had various meetings with the secret committee of the English Company in London in May 1753. The English ministry also discussed the matter with the French ambassador in London. The French were willing to give up such of their new acquisitions as threatened English interests and to recognize Muhammad Ali as nawab of Arcot, provided he did not interfere in their possession of Jinji and also recognized Dupleix's pretensions for dominion in south India based on the alleged grant from Salabat Jang. But they declined to give up Masulipatam and Kondavidu. As no agreement could be reached on this point, both the French and the English prepared to send out squadrons to the East.

It is these talks in Europe that are held to mark the beginning of a new order of ideas regarding policy in the East. Political and commercial motives were now seen to be interwoven; and the English Company perceived the possibility and utility of political power supplementing trade operations. But the commercial aspect was still dominant; and there was still some talk of enforcing neutrality between the companies in Indian waters in case of war. Dodwell argues that the negotiations of the French Company aimed at keeping the advantages accruing from Dupleix's ambitious policy and at the same time, evading the resultant inconveniences. Thus they insisted upon maintaining the concessions yielding revenues, but strove to remove the danger of English hostility, not only for the time being, but in the event of any future war. Their proposals would effectually shut out all interference with further French projects in the Deccan.³⁸

Cambridge, *War on Coast of the Coromandel* (London, 1761). Dupleix's claims through sanads were found to be spurious, and he himself is silent on the subject in his *Memoirs*.

37 Machault, the French minister, was wholly responsible for the recall of Dupleix, which was not even communicated to the Company. There is no truth in the theory that the English offered to recall Saunders in return. The English ministry applied for Dupleix's recall. Political motives were strengthened by the impression, created by the enemies of Dupleix, that the Company's orders were constantly overlooked by him and everything was sold for presents and considerations.

38 Dodwell, *Dupleix and Clive*, 76-77.

Godeheu, the new commissary sent out by the French minister Machault to supersede Dupleix, reached Pondicherry in August 1754. The expected English squadron had not yet arrived and the French were numerically superior. But Godeheu had definite orders to come to an amicable settlement, as the English Company had also sent out positive directions for a provisional peace. When the English squadron at last reached the coast, Godeheu made formal proposals for a three months' truce, which were accepted by the English and proclaimed on 11 October 1754. This truce was intended to give time for the negotiation of a treaty. After some pressure Godeheu gave up his original claim and agreed to accept the terms proposed by the English. At the end of December a provisional treaty was signed.

The treaty has usually been regarded as sacrificing French interests and ruining the schemes of Dupleix for aggrandizement. But no French garrison was withdrawn from any place in the northern sarkars, and Bussy continued to remain with Salabat Jang on the same terms. The English council received no advantage, and at the outbreak of war in 1756 the French had control of all the territories that they had held at the time of Dupleix's departure. The fact was that both the companies were exhausted and both urgently felt the need of at least temporary cessation of hostilities. Saunders wrote to the Company on 12 January 1765: "The main considerations for making a truce are the infinite superiority of the French force, their great influence with the country powers, and the impossibility of a mere trading Company to bear all expenses of war. If war had continued, the French, by means of their cavalry, could have protected their own territories and raided ours also; whereas we might have lost our own districts in attempting to seize theirs. Further the revenues remaining in the Nawab's power will probably enable him to reduce his debt." The English thought that the peace would revive their trade investments at Madras, Fort St David and other places and increase the demand for imports from Europe. All the troops except the necessary garrisons in the country forts could be called in and their batta stopped, while the sepoys could be quartered in the nawab's territories at his own expense.³⁹

³⁹ See Dodwell, *Calendar of the Madras Despatches 1744-55*, 252-53; Diary and Consultation Book, 1754, Military Department; Consultations of the Council, 6 December, 22 December.

UNEASY ANGLO-FRENCH PEACE

During the interval between the departure of Godeheu and the arrival of his successor de Leyrit, Muhammad Ali's position became more stable, but the French paid increased honours to the son of Chanda Sahib. De Leyrit was "a cold, silent and haughty man, whose solemnity covered little but dullness and self-seeking and irresolution". The Mysoreans refused to recognize the Anglo-French truce of January 1755 and continued their operations near Trichinopoly; but Nanj Raja had to depart to Mysore with his troops owing to the positive injunctions of his brother, Deva Raja. Colonel Heron undertook an expedition into the Madura and Tinnevelly districts to collect the dues from the poligars. The English had to pacify the raja of Tanjore and the tondaman of Pudukkottai who were jealous of the Marava chief of Ramnad helping Heron. Heron had to retire in discomfiture from Madura and suffered a defeat in the Nattam pass at the hands of the Kallars. He was subsequently tried by a court-martial for misconduct and fraudulent collusion with Mahfuz Khan. When Srirangapatnam was besieged by Salabat Jang and Bussy, and Deva Raj was forced to give a very large sum as ransom, Nanj Raja protested; his argument was that as he was an ally of the French, de Leyrit should instruct Bussy not to make war on him. But the latter pleaded that Bussy and his European army were paid by Salabat Jang and were under his control. The French also claimed control over Udayarpalayam where the local poligar played off Muhammad Ali against them.

Abdul Waheb Khan, the younger brother of the nawab, created considerable disorder in the Arcot country of which he was in charge. The English governor advised Muhammad Ali to settle with his family at Arcot. The nawab began his march to that place through the Tanjore country, escorted by a body of English troops under Captain Polier (July 1755). Early in December the English flag at Arcot was replaced by that of the nawab. The fort was named Muhammad Nur (Muhammadpur) and the nawab was proclaimed ruler with high-sounding titles. In the beginning of the year 1756 Kilpatrick marched to reduce the untamable Murtaza Ali of Vellore, to whom Robert Orme had been sent by the Madras government for negotiation. The Marathas and Murar Rao reappeared on the scene. Balaji Baji Rao made peace with Salabat Jang near Srirangapatnam and was persuaded by Bussy not to make further demands on Mysore.

About the end of June 1756 there was a change of governors at Fort St David, Clive taking charge from Starke. Early in June news was received of the British government's order for the seizure of

French vessels on the high seas and of the probability of war. The Madras council desired Admiral Watson, then in the Bay, to prevent French troop ships from reaching Pondicherry, as it was reported that the French Company had despatched three ships with a complement of 3,000 men to India.

Salabat Jang had, meanwhile, quarrelled with Bussy who had been dismissed. His letter to the English at Madras asking for assistance, which reached them on 14 June, was immediately accepted and preparations were made for the despatch of troops to him. The driving away of the French out of the Deccan was always deemed essential for the Company's success in Karnatak.⁴⁰ The Madras council recommended to the Bombay select committee to enter into an alliance with the Marathas and root out French influence from Salabat Jang's court. The secret committee of the court of directors had written to Bourchir at Bombay, on 26 March 1755, urging the conclusion of a secret treaty with the Marathas under the cloak of an expedition against Angria and an attack on Salabat Jang and his allies, while the select committee at Madras would make a diversion on the Masulipatam side. But the secret committee later revised this plan; in a letter dated 13 February 1756 the Bombay authorities were directed not to join the Marathas in a campaign in the Deccan. Bussy's dismissal occurred while these negotiations were going on.

Before the expedition for his relief could be organized, news came on 13 July of the loss of Qasimbazar in Bengal and of the imminent danger to Calcutta from Nawab Siraj-ud-daulah. On a fresh application from Salabat Jang, the Madras council resolved to send the Deccan expedition. But when the preparations for it were complete, news was received on 3 August about the imminence of the fall of Calcutta and the desperate plight of the English in Bengal. It was now resolved to send reinforcements to Bengal and to suspend the Golconda expedition. On 16 August news was received at Pondicherry that war had been declared between England and France on 23 February, and that even before that declaration a royal squadron had left France for the East. By the beginning of September Pondicherry had heard of the reconciliation effected between Salabat Jang and Bussy who was now restored to his position.

The year 1756 came to an end with the cultivation of land in the French territories going from bad to worse and the commandants and sureties not paying back what they had taken. Plague and pestilence prevailed at Arcot, Vellore, Wandiwash and other places and as many as 15,000 Europeans, Hindustani Muslims and Paraiyahs

⁴⁰ Letter of Madras Council to Secret Committee, 1 March 1756.

(Adi Dravidas) died at Arcot alone. Small-pox raged most fiercely over the whole region.

After Bussy's reconciliation with Salabat Jang there followed the ghastly tragedy (February 1757) perpetrated by Vijayarama Raju⁴¹ of Vizianagram against the raja of Bobbili, who had sheltered Shaikh Ibrahim and was suspected of treachery against the French. The Bobbili garrison fought with the heroism of despair. When the victors entered the fort they found everywhere desolation and fire. Vijayarama Raju contrived to effect the almost complete destruction of the Bobbili family. This tragedy was a momentous event in the annals of the northern sarkars.

Bussy arrived at Rajahmundry towards the end of 1756 for stabilising French dominion and for recovering arrears of tribute. After the tragedy of Bobbili, he proceeded through the northernmost part of the Chicacole sarkar and even thought of marching to the aid of Siraj-ud-daulah through Cuttack. But he had news of the continuous successes of the English in Bengal and of their capture of Chandernagar; so he abandoned the plan and resolved upon an immediate retaliation by attacks on the English factories on the Coromandel coast. The French capture of the English factory at Vizagapatam took place on 26 June. The French were now able to control all the coast from Masulipatam to Vizagapatam, as the other English factories in the northern sarkars, like Madapollam Palakollu, Nelli-palli and Bandamurlanka, had been seized.⁴²

To return to Karnatak. Though Muhammad Ali had entered Arcot in triumph under English escort, at the end of August 1755, the poligars were in heavy arrears of tribute to him, and he was urged, in return for military assistance, to transfer the management of certain districts to the Company. The nawab promised to settle the Company's share of the rent of the Arcot countries before he gave any *Coule* to the renters. He also promised to give the English half the revenues of Madura and Tinneyelly which were yet to be conquered. In the Arcot country the qiladars were disobedient, and even with English assistance those of Vellore, Chettupattu and Elavansore con-

⁴¹ He had been easily induced by Jafar Ali Khan, the nazim of Chicacole, to join him in opposing the entry of the French. From this alliance he was shortly afterwards seduced by the French offer of lease of the two sarkars of Chicacole and Rajahmundry at a very favourable rate. Orme says that this temptation was most effective.

⁴² De Leyrit argued that the truce of Godeheu was confined only to Karnatak and that the French were at liberty to help Salabat Jang in the Deccan; the English retorted that this argument would justify their immediate interference in the Deccan as against Bussy.

tinued practically independent; and the last of them threatened to call in the French. The English claimed that under the provisional treaty of 1754 they were entitled to assist Muhammad Ali to collect the tribute due from the poligars of Arcot. De Leyrit contended that only the nizam, Salabat Jang, could properly say who was the rightful nawab of Arcot.⁴³

In the course of 1756 the nawab did not stir out of Arcot. Balaji Baji Rao, to whom the English offered a detachment, replied in September that he did not need the English troops immediately, but would visit Karnatak after the monsoon. At the same time the Madras council attempted to negotiate a treaty with Mysore which had been bled twice by the Marathas and once by Salabat Jang and was further torn by civil strife. A friendly correspondence was kept up with the nawab of Cuddapah.

OUTBREAK OF SEVEN YEARS' WAR

News was received of the declaration of war with France on 12th November 1756. The Madras government, when it sent Clive to Bengal, had reserved the power to recall him in the event of war with France. At the end of the year 1756 it was felt that the northern settlements were under the grave risk of being lost and the possessions in Arcot were barely defensible.⁴⁴ Madura was actually occupied and Tinnevelly was threatened by the rebels. Mahfuz Khan was again troublesome and Caillaud was ordered to march to Madura to undertake the 'Sisyphean' task of bringing him round. Orme's secret negotiations with Mysore did not produce any result. Meanwhile, the strengthening of the walls and bastions of Fort St George against a prospective French attack went on under the vigorous supervision of governor Pigot. The confusion in Arcot was great; and everybody, including Abdul Wahab Khan and diwan Sampat Rai, was suspected of treachery or disloyalty. But active preparations for defence were begun at Fort St David. Negotiations were started with the peshwa.

The French side was strengthened by reinforcements. The Chevalier de Soupire arrived at Pondicherry with the Regiment of Lorraine and a company of artillery in September 1757. But the new year

⁴³ See French correspondence on the subject contained in the Military Sundry Books of the Madras Records.

⁴⁴ Towards the end of October Bussy and Law went to the northern sarkars, but Vizagapatam was then protected by a warship in the roads and it was thought that the French might not immediately attack the settlements lest the English should attempt reprisals and prevent them from collecting their revenues.

(1758) saw quarrels raging between him and de Leyrit. De Soupire complained bitterly of the very unsatisfactory condition of the administration, particularly of the finances. In February a demonstration was made against Fort St David; but as reinforcements had meanwhile reached Madras, it could not be attacked.

ARRIVAL OF LALLY: FALL OF ST DAVID

From early April Pondicherry was in daily expectation of the arrival of Lally. He had been named syndic of the Company, commissary for the king and commandant-general of all the French establishments in India. Immediately after landing he ordered that de Soupire should help him in the attack on Fort St David. Discontent openly manifested itself at Pondicherry when a number of Indian labourers were pressed into service for work in connection with the proposed attack. De Leyrit rightly complained that Lally rushed into the attack without adequate preparations. In the actual attack the commandant, a Swiss officer named Polier, was thought not to have made as protracted a defence as he might have done. Moreover Admiral Pocock's failure to beat up to Fort St David against the wind dispirited the defenders.⁴⁵

The fall and destruction of Fort St David produced a great effect not only upon the country powers but also upon the English who now prepared for the inevitable siege of Madras. The two difficulties facing the French were lack of funds and the cruising of Pocock between Madras and Pondicherry. The French admiral, d'Ache, refused absolutely to attack Pocock, alleging lack of provisions, and this refusal rendered any attempt on Madras futile until the approach of the north-east monsoon should compel Pocock to leave the coast. During this interval Lally might lead his troops northward, drive the English from their posts from the Arcot country, and confine them in Madras itself; or he might try to collect money in Tanjore. He was also advised to compel the raja of Tanjore to pay back his old debts to Chanda Sahib.

LALLY'S TANJORE CAMPAIGN

The Tanjore campaign of Lally was ruined by neglect. From Nagore he proceeded to Tiruvarur and from thence threatened the raja. He advanced to Karikal and ravaged the country on his way. After some fruitless negotiations he began a regular siege of the Tanjore fort. But his ammunition was almost exhausted and his pro-

45 The siege and capture of Fort St David are described by Orme (II, 307 ff.)

visions were fast running out. On the other side the English fleet, after fighting an indecisive engagement with the French squadron, actually threatened Karikal, on which Lally depended for his supplies. Under these circumstances he resolved on an immediate retreat. Spiking his guns, he retreated to Pondicherry, closely followed and harassed by the enemy (July-August 1758).

The naval engagement referred to above disheartened Admiral d'Ache, who decided to quit the coast for Mauritius against the united opinion of Lally and the council of Pondicherry. From this time the English had the undisputed command of the sea. In April 1759 d'Ache appeared again on the Coromandel coast; but his stay was short, and after a feeble encounter with the English fleet he quitted the coast never to appear again.

FORDE'S VICTORY

Lally's ineffective raid into the Tanjore country discredited him considerably. A second mistake on his part led to greater calamity: the complete elimination of the French power in the Deccan. Before proceeding to Tanjore he wrote to Bussy ordering him and Moracin, the governor of the northern sarkars, to join him with all their troops, leaving at Masulipatam only a very small body under Conflans, an incapable soldier. No sooner had Bussy departed for Pondicherry than Ananda Raju, the son of Vijayarama Raju and raja of Vizianagram, revolted, took Vizagapatam by assault and sent urgent appeals to Calcutta and Madras for assistance in expelling the French. The Madras authorities were not in a position to lend him any effective assistance; but Clive decided to send from Calcutta a strong force under Captain Forde, an able and loyal lieutenant of his. Forde quickly joined the rebel chief, attacked the French who were strongly posted at Condore near Rajahmundry, and secured a decisive victory (December 1758). It was the first severe blow at the ascendancy of the French in the Deccan and finally destroyed the confidence that the nizam had reposed in them. Encouraged by successes, Forde pushed forward and soon got possession of the fort of Rajahmundry; Conflans fell back on Masulipatam with the wreck of his forces. For the time being Forde was unable to proceed further owing to lack of funds and vacillation on the part of Ananda Raju. His victory, however, greatly raised the English in the estimation of the nizam and other country powers.

SIEGE OF MADRAS

A few days before the battle of Condore, Lally began the long-

planned siege of Madras. In the interval between his retreat from Tanjore and his advance on Madras he proceeded against Arcot hoping that its capture would replenish his treasury. He took many small forts and entered Arcot in triumph, where he proclaimed Raza Sahib, the son of Chanda Sahib, as the rightful nawab. But these successes brought him no substantial gains and no monetary relief. At Arcot Bussy joined him.

The two men, Lally and Bussy, were poles asunder in temper and character. Bussy was an able soldier skilled in statecraft; Lally had a supreme contempt for diplomacy and political negotiations. Bussy had established his power in the Deccan by his skill and courage as a commander and had consolidated it by his tact. He considered that French ascendancy in the Deccan was of supreme importance for the maintenance of French hold over the northern sarkars. Lally held that the foundation of French dominion in India by diplomacy was a vain dream; in his view the French could have no firm hold on the country until the English were driven out of it. His declared aim was: "No more English in India." Bussy strove hard to persuade Lally to permit him to return to Hyderabad; but Lally refused to allow him to do so, grew suspicious of his sincerity, and came to hate him as a personal foe and a traitor to the nation. Bussy was outraged at Lally's conduct and unwilling to co-operate with him heartily.

The siege of Madras opened on 14 December 1758, but Lally was not able to open fire until 2 January 1759. Major Lawrence, who was in command of the English forces, had strongly provisioned Madras and made elaborate preparations for its defence. The French erected several batteries all round the fort and used them for severe cannonade. But the investment was not very close and the English shells had good effect upon the French batteries; moreover, the English had the advantage of communication by sea and made frequent sallies. Every morning the bombardment of the French commenced regularly at day-break and the fire was always vigorously returned. The siege lasted for 67 days; and for 46 days the French kept up a vigorous shell-fire. Throughout the siege Yusuf Khan, the commandant of the English Company's sepoys, proved to be of great service by distracting the movements of the French.

Lally received no assistance from Pondicherry: his provisions ran short, his soldiers were on the verge of mutiny, and the sepoys deserted in large numbers. To add to his troubles, an English fleet was descried off the coast on 16 February and anchored in the roads the same evening. Immediately afterwards the French raised the siege and retreated towards St Thomas' Mount. But

even before the arrival of the English fleet Lally had resolved to raise the siege. However, on the next day English soldiers landed from the ships and the fort was once more secure. The defence had been very stubborn and the besieged had always returned shot for shot and patiently repaired every breach in the walls as soon as it was made.

FALL OF MASULIPATAM

One of the usual accompaniments of the warfare of those days was that the Marathas, who had been invited by the English, plundered Conjeeveram and other places unchecked. Pondicherry itself was threatened by the English vessels. Moracin was sent, instead of Bussy, to proceed to Masulipatam in consequence of the news that the English and Ananda Raju had advanced against that place, plundered its suburbs, and were about to launch an attack on the fort. Soon afterwards Brereton, the commander of the English troops advancing from Madura, scaled the walls of the Conjeeveram fort (*i.e.* its Big Temple) and occupied the town itself. Lally left for Wandiwash. On 22 April news was received that Masulipatam had been captured.

Forde's expedition succeeded beyond expectation. After defeating the French near Rajahmundry (7 December 1758) he was prevented from investing Masulipatam, by differences with the raja, until 7 March. On the night of 7-8 April he took it by assault, making the Marquis de Conflans and the whole garrison prisoners.

BATTLE OF WANDIWASH

The situation at Pondicherry had become so intolerable by the end of April that the Europeans had to be posted at the principal gates and on the ramparts. Lally tried to enlist the help of Murar Rao through Father Noronha, the bishop of Mylapore. The English ships were cruising off the Tanjore coast and the alliance of the raja of Tanjore was eagerly sought after. Even at this moment Lally continued to recognize Raza Sahib as the rightful nawab. Early in August English vessels appeared in the Pondicherry road and caused great consternation. News was received a few days later of the English capture of Louisbourg in Canada and of the declaration of war by Denmark against France. By December rice became scarce at Pondicherry. After months of manoeuvring the French cantoned their troops at Wandiwash and Chettupattu and withdrew the rest to Pondicherry, while the English troops were cantoned at Conjeeveram and at Chingleput, thus producing a temporary stalemate.

Coote arrived at Madras towards the end of October 1759 and joined the troops at Conjeeveram. Subsequently he marched towards Arcot and contrived to capture the fort of Wandiwash. He next occupied the fort of Karunguzhi. Moracin, who was sent to Ganjam at the northern extremity of the Chicacole sarkar, had to return discomfited to Pondicherry before the end of the year.

The fateful battle of Wandiwash (22 January 1760) destroyed the last chance for French survival. The loss of Karunguzhi and of the Wandiwash fort taught Lally the necessity of concentrating his forces. He assembled his army at Arcot by calling in all detachments. Early in January 1760 Coote also arrived in the neighbourhood of Arcot. Both sides were busy for some days outbidding each other for the co-operation of Murar Rao and the body of horsemen under his command. At last the Marathas numbering 3,000 joined the French.

Lally moved about 10 January from Arcot to Tiruvattur; and halting at the latter place he made a dash for Conjeeveram. Coote hastened to Conjeeveram soon after. Lally's plan was to divert the attention of Coote with a part of his army while he attempted to capture Wandiwash, where he began to prepare batteries to reduce the fort. Coote moved from Conjeeveram to Uttiramerur and in his turn planned to wait until Lally should become fully engaged in the siege operation, when he could either attack the besieging force or give battle to the covering force of Bussy.

When the French were fully committed to the siege of Wandiwash, the English batteries opened fire on them on 20 January. On the next day Coote marched from Uttiramerur with his cavalry for reconnaissance. Soon, finding that the main rampart was breached, he ordered his infantry to join him at once. On the morning of 22 January Coote assembled his troops for battle. The French defeat was decisive. Orme tells us that when the cannonade once commenced, the brunt of the fighting fell entirely on the Europeans in both the armies. The English took 24 pieces of cannon, besides large quantities of ammunition and stores. The French lost 200 Europeans, besides 160 taken prisoner, among whom was Bussy, who was permitted by Coote to proceed to Pondicherry on parole.

The defeated French troops fled to Chettupattu and thence to Jinji and shortly afterwards retreated to Pondicherry. Coote secured the surrender of Chettupattu on 29 January. A week later he began the siege of Arcot which fell after a resistance of five days. On the last day of February Tiruvannamalai surrendered to a detachment of English troops under Captain Smith. Coote marched to Perimukkal which finally submitted on 4 March, though the first assault made on it was unsuccessful.

FALL OF PONDICHERRY

The growing confusion at Pondicherry is vigorously portrayed by Ananda Ranga Pillai.⁴⁶ Bussy was now asked by Coote to surrender himself, in spite of Lally's offer to ransom him. He departed for Madras on 9 March and the Europeans sent their women and children away.

The English horse plundered right up to the bound-hedge. Karikal was raided by a small party that landed from some ships in the road and finally captured on 5 April. Its capture was worth the trouble because it afforded a certain inlet into the territories to Tanjore and its revenues. On his way back the English commander took Chidambaram and Vriddhachalam. Early in April Coote appeared near Valudavur, 9 miles west of Pondicherry, while the French retreated to the bound-hedge. On 17 April the French lost in an encounter at the Perimbai hill and the villages in the vicinity of Pondicherry came to be occupied by the English. Lally was desperately anxious to secure the help of Haidar Ali. It was agreed that the latter should immediately send a body of 2,000 horse and 3,000 sepoys with artillery and should be given the forts of Tyagadrug and Elavanasore and one lakh of rupees a month. Haidar agreed to supply additional horse and sepoys in consideration of further territorial concessions.

Coote came to know of the negotiations of Haidar Ali with Lally, but he thought that the former was busy at Srirangapatnam with his own affairs. In the beginning of June, however, the first division of the Mysore troops under Makhdum Ali, Haidar's brother-in-law, arrived at Tyagadrug and routed Krishna Rao, the English sepoy leader, and made him retreat. The Mysore troops stationed at Dindigul commenced hostilities against the poligars dependent on the Trichinopoly country. In July they won another victory at Tiniviti and Haidar was much elated. Coote as a measure of retaliation captured the Villianallur fort. Food supplies became very scarce at Pondicherry and prices soared high. Makhdum Ali complained of lack of provisions: his troops plundered the villages and marched to Jinji.

Pigot, the governor of Madras, himself arrived before Pondicherry in August but even the prospect of imminent destruction could not reconcile the council to him. Coote once more assumed command of the siege operations and was able to open fire in December on the defence of Pondicherry itself. Early in January 1761 a tempest

⁴⁶ The aged diarist was himself asked to guard a rampart on the walls of the fort with a body of 50 sepoys at his own expense.

scattered the English squadron and Lally thought there was still some hope. But in a few days the ships were back again and Pondicherry, suffering from extreme starvation, surrendered at discretion on 15 January. After more than four months of resistance Lally, sick and worn out with despair and exhaustion, surrendered unconditionally. The spoils were very considerable, including 484 guns, cannon, howitzers and mortars, 12,000 muskets and a huge quantity of shots and shells, gun-powder and other stores. The victors ruthlessly demolished all the fortifications of the city.

The fall of Pondicherry brought the war virtually to a close. Tugadhrug and Jinji, the two remaining fortresses of the French in Karnatak, speedily surrendered; Mahe on the Malabar coast was also reduced. By April 1761 there remained not a single place under the French in India. The fate of Lally, the last champion of the French cause, was miserable. When he returned to Paris, he was thrown into prison and later shamefully put to death.

The fall of Pondicherry marks the final failure of the French to establish an empire in India. "It is true that the Peace of Paris restored to France, in 1763, Pondicherry and her other dependencies in Southern India; but they were restored, dismantled and defenceless, with their trade annihilated, with their influence gone, with the curse of defeat and failure stamped upon their habitations, they were restored at a time when England, using well the precious moments, had rooted herself firmly in the soil."⁴⁷

CAUSES OF FRENCH DEFEAT

The complete destruction of the French power, which appeared to occupy such a strong position in the years 1746-51, was the result of the operation of many causes, some proximate and others remote, some superficial and others deep-rooted. In the first place, the French Company was much inferior to its English rival. From its very inception, the French Company was characterised by excessive government control. After 1723 all its higher officials were nominated by the Crown; and fixed dividends were guaranteed to the shareholders, irrespective of the profit or loss of the trade with India. They held no meeting at all for twenty years after 1725, and were merely satisfied with the regular receipt of their income. Real control over the Company passed into the hands of the king's commissaries. Thus the Company tended to become more and more a mere department of state and was marked by the lethargy and want of enterprise characteristic of the reign of Louis XV (1715-74). In

47 Malleon, *History of the French in India*, 581.

addition, the European wars of France in the eighteenth century largely limited the amount of attention that the government could devote to Indian affairs. The Company, besides being dependent on a weak administration, was also lacking in the support of a strong and wealthy trading class.

The Abbe Morellet, who was commissioned to report on the condition of the French Company soon after the close of the Seven Years' War, declared that it was financially unsound even when it began the struggle with the English in 1744. He compared the trade of the two companies in the period 1736-56 and found that the trade of the English was four times in value as much as that of the French. During the period of the struggle very few ships left for France with cargoes from India; and no large sums of money were despatched to India to revive the falling trade. After 1751 there was a precipitate decline in the French trade. The commerce of the English Company, on the other hand, flourished even during the war. The funds available for the French in India were always deficient; while the ministry in Paris, entangled in complex European wars, could not send adequate financial support. Very frequently the French in India were compelled to evade their financial obligations. Dupleix was handicapped in the execution of his plans for want of funds and was forced to fall back on his private resources and sometimes even to borrow on his personal credit. The wars and conquests of the French were unfortunately never self-supporting, "while the English did, on the whole, make their conquests pay". Even Bussy, a soldier and diplomat, was of the opinion that laurels and conquests might be good enough for a commercial company, but were always bad in the end when the expenses exceeded the receipts. The affairs of the French were trained, to a much greater extent than in the case of the English, by the irregular gains which the wars and alliances with the country powers brought; while the peculation and corruption of the officials were unbounded. These cankered evils in the organization of the French Company might be considered as one of the prime factors which contributed to its final failure.

Except Dupleix, and to some extent Lally and Bussy, all the other French representatives in India were men of inferior talents. Even Dupleix was not sufficiently farseeing in some matters; he miscalculated the enemy's designs on several occasions. Lally's vision was always clouded by passion and his Indian career was wrecked by his overbearing temperament and his consequent estrangement from his colleagues. Bussy, in spite of his skill, could not succeed in building up the fabric of French dominion in the Deccan on a firm basis; and his withdrawal from the scene was quickly followed by the

crumbling down of the whole edifice. The French leaders did a great deal to nullify the success of their projects. On the other hand, the greatest possible cordiality existed among the English leaders. Lawrence was not at all jealous of Clive when the latter's reputation began to eclipse his own; and Clive reciprocated this feeling by a warm admiration and sincere respect for his old leader. The civil authorities of the English in their turn warmly supported the efforts of the military commanders, and never once failed to stand by them. The English possessed an array of able soldiers and cautious statesmen in the persons of Lawrence, Clive, Coote and Forde, Saunders and Pigot, any one of whom was more than a match for his French adversary.

Even when we look at the mere military side of the whole conflict, we see that the English forces were easily superior to those of the French and always got the better of their rivals in all pitched battles. The English soldier was more enduring and displayed greater valour than the French; while the sepoys in the pay of the English were under better discipline and more attached to their masters than their counterparts on the French side.

The steady successes of the English on the mainland was accompanied by, and largely due to, their success at sea. "The mastery of the sea, which usually, although not invariably, remained in British hands, gave the opponents of the French an advantage which no minor (French) success on land could balance." No nation can hope to hold an extensive dominion lying several thousand miles across the ocean, unless it be powerful at sea and able to maintain its lines of communication. England was gradually building up her ascendancy on the waterways of the world and her naval supremacy had become an assured fact at the close of the Seven Years' War. In all the phases of the Anglo-French struggle the English fleet always came to the rescue of their principal settlements and relieved them from their most embarrassing situations.

The decline in the French naval power would in any case have contributed to the final victory of the English. Captain Mahan, the talented author of *The Influence of Sea-Power upon History*, explains at great length the consequences to both the parties in the struggle of their respective naval strength.

The successful turn that was given to the course of the struggle by Clive in the most critical situations should never be lost sight of. His capture of Arcot in 1751 diverted a large part of the enemy forces before Trichinopoly and freed Muhammad Ali from his great danger. It was again his advice that made possible the isolation of Law in Srirangam and his ultimate surrender. He alone realised

the assured superiority of England on the sea; and being convinced that the days of French political power in India were numbered, he steadily refused to risk his position in Bengal by proceeding to the help of Madras when Lally laid siege to it. Again, it was his bold plan of despatching Force to the northern sarkars that led to the extinction of French power in that quarter. The English conquest of Bengal gave them the control of the richest part of India and furnished them with 'the sinews of war and a firm base of operations on the mainland'. Clive's capture of Chandernagar deprived France of her only settlement in that province which was in more respects than one the key to the Indian empire. Once the English had secured possession of Bengal, their ultimate success was assured, no matter what might happen in other parts of India. It was Bengal that gave the English after 1757 an invincible military strength and an overwhelming superiority in finance.

It is not adequate to lay stress upon one particular factor and underrate other factors which explain the failure of the French. An impartial survey must give to each and all their proper place and perspective. To sum up, it may be said that England's success was due to a variety of causes: "the greater commercial prosperity of her trade with India; her superiority in the hard hand-to-hand fighting in Southern India; the severely practical genius of Lord Clive; her general ascendancy on the sea which became particularly marked during the Seven Years' War; the wealth and resources she was able to draw after 1757 from her occupation of Bengal; and, lastly, the greater vigour and capacity of her national government which, less entangled than that of France in European wars, had the leisure to direct its chief energies at a most critical time to the field of maritime and colonial expansion."

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

BENGAL UNDER BRITISH PROTECTORATE (1757-1765)

THE MID-EIGHTEENTH CENTURY was a turning point in the history not only of Bengal but of India as a whole. The vitality of the Mughal empire was exhausted, and its complete eclipse was only a question of time; the seeds of British political supremacy were being sown in the fertile plains of Bengal and in Karnatak. Siraj-ud-daulah's brief regime at Murshidabad marked a crucial stage in the emergence of new India.

ACCESSION OF SIRAJ-UD-DAULAH

Nawab Alivardi Khan died in April 1756 without leaving any male issue. He left three daughters whom he had married to the three sons of his elder brother Haji Ahmad. Mirza Muhammad Siraj-ud-daulah was the son of his youngest daughter Amina Begam, wife of Zain-ud-din Ahmad Haibat Jang. Born in 1733 a few days before Alivardi's appointment as deputy governor of Bihar, he became an object of his grandfather's special favour and affection which grew deeper with his elevation to the subahdarship of Bengal. Early in May 1752 Alivardi declared Siraj as his successor. The young man's attitude towards the Europeans at this time was far from hostile. Soon afterwards, during his stay at Hughli, he was visited by the French and Dutch governors with presents befitting his dignity¹. The president of the council at Calcutta, Roger Drake, accompanied by Chuttender and Becher, also visited him there in September 1752. They were all received by him, as the Calcutta council observed, 'with the utmost politeness and distinction far superior than was paid the French or Dutch'.² The conduct of Siraj-ud-daulah was highly appreciated by the court of directors³ who wrote in one of their letters⁴ to the Calcutta council that

1 Bengal Letter to Court, 18 September 1752, para 81.

2 Ibid, para 112.

3 Court's Letter to Bengal, 23 January 1754.

4 Ibid, 29 November 1754.

the 'Country Government' had 'always shown more preferable marks of favour to the English than to the other European Nations'.

Alivardi's choice of Siraj as his successor naturally caused heart-burning to his two sons-in-law, Nawazish Muhammad Shahamat Jang and Sayyid Ahmad Saulat Jang, deputy governors of Dacca and Purnea respectively. Both of them, however, died towards the close of Alivardi's administration. But Ghasiti Begam, widow of the former, and Shaukat Jang, the latter's son, remained seriously jealous of Siraj-ud-daulah. There was also no dearth of other self-interested persons to foment conspiracies against Siraj-ud-daulah's succession. They were active even before the old nawab breathed his last⁵.

Siraj had suspicions, not without good grounds, that the English were in complicity with his rivals. Jean Law tells us that like some others the English, 'led away by the idea that he would not have sufficient influence to get himself recognised as Subahdar . . . carried on correspondence' with Ghasiti Begam. Siraj-ud-daulah even suspected them of having 'an understanding' with Shaukat Jang⁶. Under the impression that the rivals of Siraj had better prospects of success, the council at Calcutta considered it advisable to be on good terms with their leader, Rajballabh. So at the request of Watts, chief of the English factory at Qasimbazar, they gave shelter to Rajballabh's son, Krishnadas, when the latter fled away to Calcutta in March 1756 with his family and 'with immense riches of his father and widow (Ghasiti Begam) of his master'⁷. It is noted in Holwell's letter to the court of directors, dated 30 November 1756, that Rajballabh had joined Ghasiti Begam in opposing the succession of Siraj-ud-daulah; and 'finding the death of the old Suba was near at hand, and recollecting his own family and the greatest part of his wealth were exposed to danger at Dacca, his first care was to draw them to a place of security'. So he "applied to Mr Watts . . . telling his family were going from Dacca to worship at Jagernaut (Puri) and should take Calcutta in the way; requesting at the same time that they might there find a proper reception". Orme, the famous contemporary historian, writes that when there remained no hope of Alivardi's recovery Ghasiti Begam left Murshidabad city and encamped with 10,000 men at Motijhil, a garden two miles south of the city. "Many now began to think and to say that she would prevail in her opposition" against Siraj-ud-daulah. Watts was 'easily induced to oblige her minister' and advised the authorities at Calcutta to comply with Rajballabh's request⁸.

⁵ Hill, *Bengal in 1756-57*, III, 163.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid. II. 4.

⁸ *Military Transactions of the British Nation in Indostān*, II, 50.

All this naturally strengthened Siraj-ud-daulah's suspicion against the English. When Dr Forth, surgeon of the Cossimbazar factory, came to see the ailing nawab Siraj said in his presence that the English 'intended to support Ghasiti Begam'. On Alivardi's query regarding this charge the surgeon dismissed it as a 'malicious report' and said that the English had no desire to interfere in political matters. But Siraj-ud-daulah's suspicion was not removed.

This was the situation when Alivardi died and the heir-designate assumed the reins of government. Drake, president of the council at Calcutta, wrote a letter of congratulation to the new nawab and asked for his favour and protection. Siraj assured the Company's *vakil* that "he would show the English greater marks of friendship and esteem than his grandfather had done".⁹

But the *masnad* of Bengal did not prove to be a bed of roses for Siraj-ud-daulah even for a moment. At the outset he had to reckon with the clever machinations of his rival kinsmen¹⁰ as also their shrewd and intriguing partisans, chiefly Rajballabh. Though not yet possessed of ripe experience in matters of administration and already addicted to the vices of drinking and debauchery, then so much prevalent among the members of the aristocracy, Siraj was intelligent enough to realize the necessity of immediate suppression of the internal dangers. So within a fortnight of the death of Alivardi, he by a masterly stroke frustrated the intrigues of Ghasiti Begam by removing her peacefully and quietly to her own palace and by taking possession of her wealth¹¹. Then he dealt with Shaukat Jang who had not yet recognized his accession. The nawab left Murshidabad for Purnea on 16 May 1756¹², asking the English and the French on the same day to pull down the fortifications which they were reported to have commenced erecting during the period of his grandfather's last illness¹³. On reaching Rajmahal (about 20 May) he received Drake's letter of explanation regarding the fortifications¹⁴. Though written in modest terms the letter showed no desire to comply with the nawab's demand. So he cancelled his march to Purnea and proceeded to deal with the English, an open rupture with whom was soon precipitated by certain events.

9 Hill, III, 290.

10 Ibid. 163.

11 Ibid. 217-218.

12 Hill, I, 6.

13 Ibid. III, 165.

14 Ibid. II, 8.

CAUSES OF SIRAJ-UD-DAULAH'S WAR WITH THE ENGLISH

It is difficult to agree with the view which attributes the quarrel between Siraj-ud-daulah and the English to his 'trivial, inconsistent, and in various respects ill-grounded pretences', his 'violent and rapacious disposition',¹⁵ his recklessness, premeditated designs, and unjustifiable vindictiveness. In fact, a collision between them was the natural outcome of their conflicting interests. It could not be avoided unless both preferred to sleep over changing conditions. There is no doubt that the English East India Company was trying to improve its position and to enhance its influence in Bengal. Indeed, the possibility of a revolution in the government of the province had already been contemplated by one of its able officers even during the lifetime of Alivardi¹⁶.

Construing some actions on the part of the English Company as prejudicial to the authority of his government, Siraj-ud-daulah protested on the basis of three specific charges. One was that the English had 'built strong fortifications and dug a large ditch in the King's dominions contrary to the laws of the country'. The second was that they had 'abused the privilege of their dastaks by granting them to such as were no ways entitled to them, from which practice the King has suffered greatly in the revenue of his customs'. The third complaint was that they had 'given protection to such of the King's subjects as have by their behaviour in the employes they were enthusted with made themselves liable to be called to an account and instead of giving them up on demand they allowed such persons to shelter themselves within their bounds from the hands of justice'. He was prepared to 'pardon their fault and permit their residence here' if they promised 'to remove the foregoing complaints of their conduct' and agreed 'to trade upon the same terms as other merchants did' in the time of Murshid Quli Khan¹⁷.

None of the charges was baseless. There is no doubt that, during the last days of Alivardi, the Europeans in Bengal, apprehending serious disturbances after his demise, 'began without any concealment', as Hill remarks, 'to repair and strengthen their fortifications'¹⁸. Siraj did not consider it proper to remain silent in the matter; he felt, like Murshid Quli and Alivardi, that the Europeans could be permit-

¹⁵ Watts, *Memoirs of the Revolution in Bengal in the years 1757-60*, 12.

¹⁶ Hill, III, 328. *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, Allahabad Session, 1938.

¹⁷ Hill, I, 3-4.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* xlvi.

ted to build strong fortifications within his jurisdiction only at the cost of his own authority. He apprehended that their political and military successes in south India would embolden them to interfere in Bengal politics. The Carnatic episode must have considerably influenced Siraj-ud-daulah's policy towards the Europeans in Bengal. David Rannie notes in an account, dated August 1756, that the principal cause of the war between Siraj-ud-daulah and the English 'is the knowledge of what happened on the coast of Coromandel, for many Moors (and some of distinction among them) have come lately from thence and declared that the English and French have divided the country while their respective Nabobs are no better than shadows of what they should be'¹⁹.

Siraj desired to enforce his injunction prohibiting erection of fortifications not only on the English but also on the other European trading companies. Even Holwell writes: ". . . though liberty of trade is granted to the Danes and Prussians, yet they are prohibited fortifications or garrisons"²⁰ The French also received his orders to desist from strengthening their fortifications at Chandernagar at the same time when those concerning the English were communicated to Drake²¹. They were able to satisfy the nawab. But he was 'extremely disgusted', writes Cooke, secretary of the Calcutta council, at the answer he received from Drake²².

Plenty of contemporary evidence fully warrants the charge regarding abuse of *dastaks* by the Company's servants. It had continued unabated in spite of strong complaints against it by Siraj-ud-daulah's predecessors and some attempts on the part of the Company's authorities to regulate it²³. In 1755 the court of directors asked the Calcutta council 'to be extremely careful to prevent all abuses of the *dastaks*'. We read in the contemporary account of David Rannie: "The injustice of the Moors consists in that being by their courtesy permitted to live here as merchants, to protect and judge what natives were their servants and to trade custom free, we under that pretence protected all the Nabob's subjects that claimed our protection, though they were neither our servants nor our merchants, and gave our *destucks* or passes to numbers of natives to trade custom free, to the great prejudice of the Nabob's revenue, nay more, we levied large duties upon goods brought into our districts from the very people

19 Hill, III, 384.

20 Ibid, II, 17.

21 Ibid, 8.

22 Ibid, 292.

23 K. K. Datta, *Bengal Subah*, I, 301-2.

that permitted us to trade custom free."²⁴ Holwell recorded in his letter to the court, dated 30 November 1756, that he was not surprised at the abuse of *dastaks* being treated as a cause of complaint. Drake made an exaggerated statement that he had in a great measure curbed that unlicensed 'practice' and was 'wary to remedy and put those checks which were resolved on to prevent the abuse of that indulgence'.²⁵

It is not really difficult to understand Siraj-ud-daulah's standpoint in regard to the third charge. David Rannie clearly states that the English Company gave protection to the nawab's subjects though they were neither its servants nor its merchants. Further, for certain reasons, particularly for Rajballabh's machinations against Siraj-ud-daulah's succession as the moving spirit of the party of opposition, the relation between them was not at all cordial. Rajballabh and his son Krishnadas had not given any account of their administration at Dacca for many years.²⁶ Naturally apprehensive of being called to account to Siraj-ud-daulah, Rajballabh sent his family with his son Krishnadas to Calcutta for security under the protection of the English. They continued to provide shelter for the son and family of an ex-officer of the government who had incurred the nawab's displeasure, even after the nawab had demanded their dismissal. Richard Becher, a contemporary servant of the Company, notes that the admission of Krishnadas and his wealth into Calcutta was 'a wrong step'.²⁷ He further observes: "Could it ever be imagined the government would permit the English to protect or screen from justice a man who had been in so considerable a post as *Naib* or Deputy to the Nabob of Dacca? Surely the Nabob has a right to call his subjects to an account-without our interfering and how the Company's interest was any way concerned I can not find out."²⁸ When Alivardi's end was imminent Watts himself sent a letter to the president at Calcutta suggesting that it would be 'expedient' to withdraw protection from Krishnadas and his family. Regarding it to be a 'salutary advice' and apprehending 'troublesome consequences' from continuing to protect Rajballabh's family till the death of Alivardi, Holwell 'pressed more than once for the dismissal of this family'. He pleads, however, that the president could not act accordingly because of the circumstances which he narrates thus: "We no sooner received advice of the death of Alivardi Cawn, than we had notice also of the stand made

²⁴ Hill, III, 384.

²⁵ Ibid. II, 18.

²⁶ Ibid. I, 250, 278.

²⁷ Ibid. II, 158.

²⁸ Ibid.

against Siraj-ud-daulah's succession by the young Begam (Ghasiti Begam) and her party of which Raagballob was the chief minister and favourite of his mistress so that it became at that juncture a dangerous step to the Company's interest to turn his family out of the Settlement, the more specially as for some days advices from all quarters were in favour of the Begam's party."²⁹ Self-interest was the key to this unwarranted step on the part of the English Company, but its immediate consequences proved to be detrimental to it.

The disgraceful treatment of Narayan Singh³⁰, Siraj-ud-daulah's messenger to the Company's governor, Drake, by him and some of his colleagues made matters worse. Narayan Singh carried a letter of the nawab demanding the delivery of Krishnadas with his family and wealth³¹. According to some³² he entered Calcutta in disguise on 14 April and went to the house of Omichand, one of the most influential citizens of Calcutta. As the governor, Drake, was then at Barasat, he was introduced by Omichand to Holwell and Pearkes in the evening of that day. On Drake's return to Calcutta next morning, Omichand went with Narayan Singh for interview with him. Suspecting evil motives on their part, Drake and his colleagues did not see Narayan Singh nor did they receive the letter he had with him. As ordered by them, some of their sergeants turned him out of the Company's settlement 'with insolence and derision'³³. At the same time the Calcutta council wrote to Watts at Qasimbazar to take due precautions against the adverse consequences of this step and the latter seems to have acted satisfactorily for some time.

Siraj-ud-daulah naturally felt insulted at this incident. Becher describes it as 'being an affront that it could not be expected any Prince would put up with from a sett of merchants'³⁴. There was no reason to doubt the bona fide of the letter which Narayan Singh was authorised to take with him and to see in the whole affair nothing but a clever move on the part of Omichand. Holwell himself believed that Narayan Singh had been deputed by the nawab to demand the delivery of Krishnadas and his family³⁵.

Some accused Narayan Singh of having 'clandestinely entered the town (of Calcutta)', and of being 'in secret conference with Omi-

²⁹ Hill, II, 5.

³⁰ Brother of Rajaram, faujdar of Midnapur, and head of the espionage department in the nawab's government. He is referred to also as Naraindas (Hill, I, 121).

³¹ Orme, II, 34.

³² Ibid. Hill, II, 6.

³³ Orme, II, 34.

³⁴ Hill, II, 160.

³⁵ Letter to Court, 30 November 1756, para 6.

chand³⁶. This was but a plea to cover the real motive of the Calcutta council which finds expression in the following words of Holwell: "We were all a good deal embarrassed how to act on this occasion (seeing) that the same reasons that before forbade the family being turned out of the place after the Subedar's death still subsisted equally strong against delivering them up, as the contest was yet undecided between Siraj-ud-daulah and the young Begum." It is doubtful if Narayan Singh 'stole like thief or a spy into the Settlement' (Calcutta). Becher states: "I am therefore firmly of opinion that he did not enter Calcutta in disguise and Mr Holwell's own account of the affair convinces me he did not."³⁷ Omichand's statement regarding Narayan Singh's entry into Calcutta in disguise is thus explained by him: "Omichand had, I believe, been instrumental in getting admission for Krishendas and his family into Calcutta and was very sensible the errand Narain Singh came upon would be disagreeably received. He, therefore, in dread of the gentlemen's resentment (some of whom he knew were not his friends) might pretend Narain Singh came in disguise in order it possible to clear himself from any knowledge of his coming."³⁸ Omichand stated before Holwell on 14 April that Narayan Singh 'had got in the disguise of a European dress'³⁹. But Holwell was informed next morning by the *jamadar* of the *chowkey*, where Narayan Singh had landed, that he 'came in the disguise of a common Bengal *paikar*' (broker)⁴⁰. How can the two different versions be reconciled? "There cannot well be", writes Becher significantly, "a greater distinction in dress between a Christian and a Bengali *paikar*".⁴¹

What ignited the flame was Drake's letter, received by Siraj-ud-daulah after he had reached Rajmahal about 20 May 1756, on his way to Purnea. According to Holwell, Drake observed in his reply that 'some enemies had advised his Excellency without regard to truth' that the English 'were erecting new fortification'⁴²; they were only repairing the wharf and had dug no other ditch except that one which they had executed at the time of the Maratha invasions with the 'knowledge and approbation'⁴³ of Alivardi. Drake's reply is also said to have contained the following impolitic expression: "... in the late war between our nation and the French, they had attacked and

³⁶ Hill, I. 121; II. 7.

³⁷ Ibid., II. 159.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid., 6.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid., 159.

⁴² Ibid., II. 147.

⁴³ Ibid., 8.

taken the town of Madras, contrary to the neutrality we expected had been preserved in the Mogull's dominions, and that there being at present great appearance of another war between the two Crowns, we were under some apprehensions they would act in the same manner in Bengal; to prevent which we were only repairing our Line of guns to the water-side".⁴⁴

This statement, 'carrying', as Holwell notes, 'a tacit reflection on the Suba's (Nawab's) will or power to protect' the English, exasperated Siraj-ud-daulah who is said to have exclaimed on receipt of Drake's letter: "Who shall dare to think of commencing hostilities in my country, or presume to imagine I have not power to protect them?"⁴⁵ Abandoning his campaign against Shaukat Jang, the nawab immediately marched back for Murshidabad. Before his return there (1 June) a body of his troops had invested the English factory at Qasimbazar (22 May) according to his instructions.

The Qasimbazar factory was seized by the nawab's soldiers on 4 June. It was now too late for the English to succeed in any attempt to pacify him. Taking nothing but guns and ammunition from the English factory the nawab marched for Calcutta on 5 June at the head of a large army with Watts, chief of the factory, and another member of it, as prisoners of war. They were released by the nawab during his return journey from Calcutta and the French governor at Chander-nagar was ordered by him to send them 'safe' to Madras. Both the nawab and the English tried to enlist Dutch and French assistance, but they remained neutral.

CAPTURE OF CALCUTTA BY SIRAJ-UD-DAULAH

On 16 June the nawab's army appeared before Calcutta and delivered an attack on the northern side of the town which was repulsed. Next day, however, the nawab entered the town with his troops and on the 18th drove the defenders of the Fort from their outposts. At about 10 a.m. on the 19th governor Drake, Commandant Minchin, Captain Grant and several other Englishmen left Fort William to its fate, Manningham and Frankland having already deserted it. They boarded the ships in the Hughli river with women and children and took shelter at Fulta. Those who remained in the Fort selected Holwell as governor after what they described as 'disgraceful desertion' on the part of others. But Holwell could not control confusion, disorder and tumult among those who were then in the Fort; effective

⁴⁴ Hill, II, 9.

⁴⁵ Ibid. 15.

resistance on their part became impossible. In the afternoon of 20 June the nawab's troops captured the Fort.

HOLWEIL'S 'BLACK HOLE' STORY

What was the fate of Holwell and others who surrendered themselves as prisoners of war? Holwell stated in his letters to the councils at Fort St George and Bombay dated 17 July 1756: "The resistance we made and the loss they suffered so irritated the Nawab that he ordered myself and all the prisoners promiscuously to the number of about 165 or 170 to be crammed together into a small prison in the fort called the Black Hole, from whence only about 16 of us came out alive in the morning, the rest being suffocated to death."⁴⁶ But conceding that he had committed some 'errors and omissions' in this letter 'in the wretched state' in which he was then placed, he states in his letter to Fort St George, dated 3 August 1756, that he had 'overreckoned the number of prisoners put into the Black Hole and the number of the dead the former being only 146 and the latter 123'. and that he had done 'injustice' to the nawab by charging him 'with designcally having ordered the unheard of piece of cruelty of cramming us all into that small prison'⁴⁷, as he had only passed 'general' orders for their imprisonment, and his guards perpetrated cruelties on them in a spirit of revenge for the personal losses which they had suffered.⁴⁸ Varvng statements regarding the number of English prisoners and victims have been recorded in some other letters too.⁴⁹

The veracity of Holwell's story of the 'Black Hole' came to be questioned more than half a century ago by some competent writers on strong grounds.⁵⁰ One of them J. H. Little, described it as 'a gigantic hoax'⁵¹. Inconsistencies in a number of contemporary accounts on Holwell's story, including some of his own, absence of any mention of this incident in some contemporary histories in Persian,⁵² which had reasons to be prejudiced more against than in favour of Siraj-ud-daulah, cannot but lead an unbiased writer to reasonable doubt about its authenticity. The view describing Holwell's story to be untrue

⁴⁶ Hill, I, 115.

⁴⁷ Said to be about 18 feet square According to C. R. Wilson the exact dimensions were 18 feet by 14 feet 10 inches.

⁴⁸ He expresses a similar opinion in his letter to William Davis.

⁴⁹ Hill, I, 43-44, 50, 61-62; III, 70-71.

⁵⁰ Bengal : Past and Present (1916), 136-71.

⁵¹ Ibid (1915), 76.

⁵² Such as *Siyar, Riyaz* and *Muzaffar Nama*.

has been criticised⁵³ on rather unsatisfactory grounds. Whether his story is true, half-true or untrue, it is certain that Siraj-ud-daulah was not personally responsible for what is narrated to have occurred.⁵⁴

FATE OF OTHER ENGLISH FACTORIES

On the capture of the Qasimbazar factory by the nawab's troops the Calcutta council instructed their officers in different factories to remain alert for defence and safe withdrawal if necessary. Peter Amyatt and Thomas Boddom, chiefs at Luckipur and Balasore respectively, escaped and joined Drake's party at Fulta. Richard Becher, chief of the Dacca factory, was forced to surrender it to the deputy governor, Dasarath Khan, but he found shelter—with his subordinates and the English ladies—in the local French factory. There they were treated with kindness and provided with a sloop which carried them to Fulta on 26 August. The only factory that the English could retain was that at Balaramgarhi at the mouth of the Balasore river.

DEATH OF SHAUKAT JANG

Siraj-ud-daulah started from Calcutta (renamed Alinagar by him) on 24 June, leading one of his generals named Manickchand (previous diwan of the Burdwan raja) as its governor, and came back to Murshidabad on 11 July. Meanwhile Shaukat Jang had managed to secure a formal farman from the Delhi court conferring on him the subahdarship which he had prepared himself to seize from Siraj-ud-daulah with the support of some discontented persons in Bengal. But Siraj took effective steps to baffle his design. Marching against him towards the end of September 1756 the nawab defeated and killed him in a battle near Manihari (in the Purnea district) on 16 October. The victorious nawab returned to Murshidabad 'in gold-decorated boats with every pomp'.⁵⁵

Thus within six months of his accession Siraj-ud-daulah succeeded in overpowering the rival opposition. He was now at the zenith of his power and prosperity, as the contemporary historian Ghulam Husain observes. This generated in his mind a false sense of security and might have led him to think that the capture of Calcutta was too strong a blow at the power of the English to leave any chance of its recovery by them. It was probably out of this confidence that he did

⁵³ Cambridge History of India, V, 156.

⁵⁴ See J. N. Sarkar, History of Bengal (Dacca University) II, 476-77. B. K. Gupta, Siraj-ud-daulah and the East India Company, 72, 138.

⁵⁵ Siyar (Eng. trans.), II, 206-7, 214. Muzafr Nama, 57ab.

not follow up his success in Calcutta by proceeding against the English at Fulta.⁵⁶ Srafton observes, "It may appear matter of wonder, why the *Soubah* permitted us to continue so quietly at Fulta, till we were become formidable to him, which I can only account for from his mean opinion of us, as he had been frequently heard to say, he did not imagine there were ten thousand men in all Ferenghistan (meaning Europe) and had no idea of our attempting to return by force."⁵⁷ Jean Law also writes that the nawab 'was very far from thinking that the English would entertain the idea of re-establishing themselves by force'.⁵⁸

RECOVERY OF CALCUTTA BY THE ENGLISH

As a matter of fact, fresh troubles were brewing for Siraj-ud-daulah, of which he had no knowledge yet. It ought to have been considered by him that the English, with their strong position in south India, would naturally make an attempt to regain what they had lost in Bengal. The fugitives of Fulta were not inactive. While struggling against great hardships with occasional assistance from some Indians of the neighbourhood⁵⁹ (including Nabakrishna of Sobhabazar in Calcutta) as also from the French and the Dutch,⁶⁰ they also engaged themselves in correspondence with some influential men in Bengal, such as Manikchand, Khwaja Wajid, Jagat Seth and Durlabhram, to 'interest them'⁶¹ in their favour. They had to wait for a few months before they fully succeeded in this game.

In the meantime other circumstances had helped the English to recover their influence and position in Bengal. On hearing of the outbreak of hostilities in Bengal, the Madras council had hurriedly sent there Major Killpatrick with 200 soldiers. This was too small a reinforcement for offensive action. But when the news of the Calcutta disaster reached them, they after some discussions decided, in view of the great importance of the settlement of Calcutta to the English, that the 'utmost efforts' should be made to recover it. Though there were apprehensions regarding the recrudescence of hostilities with the French, the council at Madras, persuaded largely by the wise arguments of Robert Orme (then second in the Madras council), resolved to send an expedition to Bengal under Admiral Watson, who had

⁵⁶ Orme, II, 79-80.

⁵⁷ *Reflections, etc.*, 61.

⁵⁸ Hill, III, 176.

⁵⁹ Hill, I, 171.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 25, 37, 306. Srafton, 60.

⁶¹ Hill, I, 57.

been sent to India two years earlier with a squadron 'and a king's regiment, and Colonel Clive, who, having already distinguished himself by his brilliant activities at Arcot, was then deputy governor of Fort St David. On 13 October the council at Fort St George wrote to Bengal that the object of the expedition was not merely to recover Calcutta and the other settlements in Bengal, but to get all their privileges restored to the 'full extent' and 'ample reparation' for the losses of the English.⁶² They further noted that, if on the arrival of these forces the nawab expressed his willingness to effect a satisfactory settlement, then "the sentiments of revenging injuries should give place to the necessity of sparing as far as possible the many bad consequences of war". But they were apparently not hopeful of any peaceful solution, for they wrote: "...the sword should go hand in hand with the pen, and on the arrival of the present armament, hostilities should immediately commence with the utmost vigour". They advised the Calcutta authorities to try 'to effect a junction with any powers in the provinces of Bengal that may be dissatisfied with the violences of the Nabob's government, or that may have pretensions to the Nabobship'.⁶³

The expedition sailed on 16 October and reached Bengal by the middle of December. On 17 December Watson and Clive wrote to the nawab two separate letters of 'unmistakably threatening character' demanding therein not only the restoration of what was claimed by them as the Company's 'ancient rights and privileges' but also 'proper satisfaction' for the losses sustained by them. The nawab sent a reply, but we do not know what it was like and most probably it did not reach Watson or Clive.⁶⁴ On 29 December Clive's troops gained success in a short skirmish with some soldiers of the nawab at Budge Budge. Manikchand made but a show of fighting and fled away to Murshidabad. Clive recovered Calcutta on 2 January without meeting any serious opposition. Early next morning Watson took possession of the Fort and made it over formally to Drake and the council of Fort William. War was formally declared against the nawab by the council at Calcutta in the name of the Company and also by Watson in the name of the king of England.⁶⁵ The English troops plundered Hughli within a few days, and destroyed there the fort and granaries of the nawab and 'as many of the magnificent houses' as 'the short time would permit'.⁶⁶ They soon

62 Hill, I, 239.

63 Ibid, 239-40.

64 Ibid, II, 70-71. *Ive's Voyage*, 98.

65 Hill, II, 84-86.

66 Scrafton, 65.

returned to Calcutta, 'ravaging' the places on both the banks of the Hughli river.

On hearing of all this Siraj-ud-daulah immediately left Murshidabad for Calcutta. Even on 23 January he wrote to Watson: "...if the English behave themselves like merchants and follow my orders, they may rest assured of my favour, protection and assistance". From the nawab's correspondence with Watson at this time it appears that he was desirous of accommodating matters with the English, but the situation had become too hot for a settlement. On 30 January he crossed the river Hughli and had shortly an indecisive fighting with the English. This was, however, followed by the conclusion of the treaty of Alinagar between him and the English on 9 February 1757. By this treaty the nawab promised to confirm what the English claimed as their old privileges, and to restore to them what had been plundered in Calcutta by his troops and had been accounted for in his state papers. He also granted them permission to fortify Calcutta as well as to coin *siccas*.⁶⁷ There is no doubt that the terms of this treaty were both honorable and advantageous for the Company as Clive himself wrote in his letter to the secret committee on 22 February.⁶⁸

It would not be correct to say that the nawab concluded this treaty being terrified by Clive's night attack on his camp. That attack was not at all a success. In fact, this cessation of hostilities by the rival parties was due to certain forces which neither of them could afford to ignore. As for the nawab, he had to consider the fact that many of his officers were unwilling to continue fighting any more.⁶⁹ Very few of them were sincerely attached to him. He also apprehended that Ahmad Shah Abdali, after his recent victory over the imperial forces, might advance further east towards Bihar and Bengal.⁷⁰ It is significant to note the following statement of the nawab in his letter to Colonel Clive, dated 17 May 1757: "By the favour and goodness of God, Abdally is returning by continued marches to his own country."⁷¹ As regards Clive, it is to be noted that the news of the recrudescence of Anglo-French hostilities had already reached India and he rightly calculated that there would be risk for English interests in a combination of the French with the nawab. He was also conscious of his own strained relations with

⁶⁷ Scrafton, 215-17. Stewart, *History of Bengal*, Appendix XII.

⁶⁸ Hill, II, 239.

⁶⁹ Syar (Eng. trans.), II, 223.

⁷⁰ Scrafton, 75.

⁷¹ Hill, II, 385.

Admiral Watson and the Calcutta council. They had chosen "the critical moment, when the Nawab was marching upon Calcutta, to harass Clive himself, and on the 18th January, demanded that he should place himself under the orders of the Council of Fort William both as to the plan of military operations and the conduct of negotiations".⁷²

CAPTURE OF CHANDERNAGAR BY THE ENGLISH

The outbreak of the Seven Years' War introduced fresh complications into Bengal politics in the midst of which Siraj-ud-daulah displayed lack of right judgment and correct decision at critical moments. A timely alliance between the French in Bengal, who were the natural enemies of the English, and the nawab would have proved to be a serious menace to the English. But the nawab failed to effect such an alliance. The negotiations of the French with the English for neutrality in Bengal finally broke off on 4 March, when the latter received a large reinforcement of Europeans from Bombay. Conquest of the French possessions in Bengal was undoubtedly desired by the English. The nawab at first protested against this on the ground that he would not allow one class of his subjects to be molested by another, and when the English engaged themselves in making preparations for an attack on Chandernagar he charged them with violation of the terms of the treaty of Alinagar.

A letter said to have been sent by the nawab to Admiral Watson on 10 March⁷³ has been construed by some as his consent to an English attack on Chandernagar. There are reasons to doubt that authenticity of this letter; even if it is regarded as coming from the nawab himself, 'it certainly was never meant', as Scrafton writes,⁷⁴ to permit the English to march against Chandernagar. As a matter of fact, the nawab's embarrassment due to his fear of a north-eastern Afghan push and the insincerity of some of his own men caused a regrettable vacillation in his mind which prevented him from taking prompt and proper steps to help the French. We read in some contemporary English accounts that there was a large force of the nawab near Chandernagar under Nanda Kumar, saujdar of Hugli, which ought to have resisted the English attack on Chandernagar. But a "well applied bribe" to Nanda Kumar "removed all obstacles, for it persuaded him to withdraw the troops under his command"⁷⁵

72 Hill, I, CL.

73 Hill, *Three Frenchmen in Bengal*, 30-31.

74 Scrafton, 75. —

75 Ibid.

from Chandernagar. The English attacked Chandernagar in March 1757. After a gallant defence of the fort there for a few days the local French chief, Renault, surrendered to the English on 23 March on certain terms. Renault and his party were kept in close confinement in Calcutta.

The capture of Chandernagar by the English dealt a crushing blow to French power and prestige in Bengal, and it meant a significant gain for the former in that period of grave complications in international and Indian politics. By destroying the chances of a Franco-Muslim alliance in Bengal against the English, it made the latter comparatively free to take bolder steps against Siraj-ud-daulah. It also adversely affected the position of the French in other parts of India by making it impossible for them to utilize Bengal's resources any longer in their conflict with the English. As Clive wrote to the select committee at Fort St George on 30 March 1757, ". . . nothing could have happened more seasonable for the expeditious re-establishment of Calcutta than the reduction of Chandernagar. It was certainly a large, rich and thriving colony, and the loss of it is an unexpressible blow to the French Company."⁷⁶

The English were anxious to take the utmost advantage of their success. To make it impossible for the nawab to utilize French assistance in their impending conflict with him and for complete extinction of French influence in Bengal, the English demanded of him the expulsion of all Frenchmen from his dominions and the surrender of the French fugitives at Qasimbazar. The nawab at first prudently refused to comply with it on certain reasonable grounds which, however, did not satisfy the English. They realized that the stay of the Frenchmen in Bengal, during the period of their acute conflict with them, as almost certain allies of the nawab, would be prejudicial to their interest. So they thought henceforth not only of total elimination of French influence but also of replacement of Siraj-ud-daulah by a new nawab whom they could more easily control. While engaged in a plot to realize their second ambition, they pressed on the nawab their demand for expelling the French. Admiral Watson even went to the length of writing to him that "if he continued to protect the King's enemies, he would light up a flame in his country, that all the waters of the Ganges should not quench". Thus intimidated and embarrassed Siraj-ud-daulah lost firmness of mind and by discarding his earlier resolution to protect the French, he asked Jean Law, chief of the French factory at Qasim-

bazar, and other French fugitives, to leave Bengal. Law and his party left Qasimbazar on 16 April and proceeded towards Bihar.

This was an extremely injudicious—indeed suicidal—step on the part of Siraj-ud-daulah. Most probably he thought that after comparative relief from the pressure of adverse circumstances he would recall the Frenchmen and utilize their services if necessary. According to the contemporary historian Ghulam Husain, the nawab at the time of Law's departure told him "that at present it was fit that he should depart; and that if there should happen anything new he would send for him again". Law exclaimed, "Send for me again! Rest assured, my Lord Nawab, this is the last time we shall see each other. Remember my words. We shall never meet again, it is nearly impossible."⁷⁷ These were prophetic words.

CONSPIRACY AGAINST SIRAJ-UD-DAULAH

Indeed, Siraj-ud-daulah's star was paling fast. A deep and well-laid conspiracy against him was now maturing.⁷⁸ Of its leaders some might have personal grievances against him; but others—principally Mir Jafar, Rai Durlabhram, Omichand and Jagat Seth, the great banker—were guided purely by motives of self-interest, which they thought would be well served if a change in government was effected. This was in keeping with the debased political atmosphere of the age, characterized by utter lack of any feeling of patriotism and by gross national degradation. Among the conspirators, the seths of Murshidabad had already participated actively in the revolution which had helped Alivardi to usurp the *masnad* of Bengal in 1740. Mir Jafar's fidelity to Alivardi's government had been shaky.⁷⁹ Watts, who was then at Murshidabad and took a very active part in the pre-Plassey transactions, writes that "discord spread itself through the Suba's Court, where the only Oracle that every Man consulted was his own Interest".⁸⁰ Apart from the internal conspirators there were the English who also considered Siraj-ud-daulah's removal necessary for furtherance of their own designs. Clive recommended to Watts 'the forming of a party to join them 'in case things should come to extremes, which many

⁷⁷ *Siyar* (Eng. trans.), II, 227.

⁷⁸ A Bengali work entitled *Maharaja Krishnachandra Rayasya Charitram* by Rajiblochan Mukhopadhyaya, first published in 1805, gives an account of this conspiracy representing Maharaja Krishnachandra of Nadia as an important member of it. There are, however, some inaccuracies in this account.

⁷⁹ K. K. Datta, *Alivardi and His Times*, 81.

⁸⁰ Watts, *Memoirs of the Revolution in Bengal*, 74.

circumstances concurred to facilitate'.⁸¹ Scrafton wrote to Walsh from Qasimbazar on 9 April 1757, asking him to give Watts a hint about 'forming a party in case of the worst' and exclaimed: "How glorious it would be for the Company to have a Nabob devoted to them!"⁸² Clive said in his statement to the House of Commons "that after Chandernagar was resolved to be attacked, he repeatedly said to the committee, as well as to others, that they could not stop there but must go further; ... and that he did suggest to Admiral Watson and Sir George Pocock, as well as to the Committee, the necessity of a revolution; that Mr Watson⁸³ and the gentlemen of the Committee agreed upon the necessity of it."

On 20 April Scrafton wrote to Clive that the seths had proposed through Omichand to set up Yar Latif Khan, an officer in Siraj-ud-daulah's government, as the nawab. But this plan was abandoned by the English early in May; their choice fell on Mir Jafar, a man of greater influence and commander-in-chief of the nawab's army. Watts carried on necessary negotiations with the conspirators, particularly with Mir Jafar, most cleverly and secretly, due precautions being taken by Clive and others to lull the nawab into a feeling of security by professions of friendship, till the final blow was struck.⁸⁴ Watts went to Mir Jafar 'in a covered *Dooley*'⁸⁵ and got the secret treaty with him finally signed in the evening of 5 June 1757. Mir Jafar promised to comply with the terms of the treaty which the English had concluded with Siraj-ud-daulah (February 1757), to treat the enemies of the English (whether Europeans or Indians) as his own enemies, to deliver up to the English all the factories and effects of the French in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, and not to permit the latter to settle any more in these provinces, to pay the expences of the English troops requisitioned by him for his own service, and not to erect any new fortifications on the river below Hughli. As compensation for the losses caused by the nawab's capture of Calcutta, he agreed to pay one crore of rupees to the English Company, 50 lakhs to the English inhabitants of Calcutta, 20 lakhs to the Hindus, Muslims and other inhabitants of Calcutta and 7 lakhs to the Armenians settled there. The Company were to get possession of the land within the Maratha Ditch and 600 yards all round, in addition to the zamindari of all

⁸¹ Scrafton, 79.

⁸² Hill, III, 343.

⁸³ Watson wrote to Clive: "I am glad to hear that Meer Jaffier's party increases. I hope everything will turn out in the expedition to your wishes and that I may soon have to congratulate you on the success of it."

⁸⁴ Scrafton, 81. Thornton, I, 229.

⁸⁵ Watts, *Memoirs*, 99.

lands to the south of Calcutta as far as Kalpi. We know from a statement of Richard Becher, then a member of the select committee, that the members of the committee received on this occasion large presents by a private arrangement.⁸⁶

Omichand was paid back in his own coin for his ignoble conduct in the course of the negotiations for the secret treaty. An extremely greedy and ambitious man, he wanted a large part of Siraj-ud-daulah's treasure and money as a price of his participation in the plot against him. When he threatened the English that if his demand was not complied with he would disclose the plot to the nawab, Clive duped him by the 'expedient of a double treaty' The draft of the real treaty written on a piece of white-coloured paper had nothing written on it about the demand of Omichand, while it was mentioned in the draft of the fictitious treaty on a piece of red-coloured paper. On Watson's refusal to sign the false treaty, Clive got his signature forged by Lushington.⁸⁷ The red-paper treaty was shown to Omichand only to quiet his suspicions till the negotiations were brought to a conclusion. After Mir Jafar's installation as nawab the trick was disclosed to Omichand; he received a rude shock and died in about a year and a half.⁸⁸

Clive was not ashamed to defend this episode before the Parliamentary Select Committee. He said, "That his Lordship never made any secret of it; he thinks it warrantable in such a case and would do it again a hundred times."⁸⁹ Some modern writers have produced 'laboured apology' in favour of it. But there is no doubt that it was a mean and disgraceful transaction,⁹⁰ 'a piece of consummate treachery'⁹¹ on the part of Clive, which 'has done more harm to his reputation than any other charge that has been brought against him'.⁹²

BATTLE OF PLASSEY

On hearing of the secret plot Siraj-ud-daulah was somewhat bewildered and he failed to rise to the occasion. Instead of taking strong measures to punish the ring-leaders of the conspiracy he himself paid a visit to Mir Jafar on 15 June and most pathetically appealed to him in the name of Alivardi for a reconciliation. Mir Jafar promised fide-

⁸⁶ Hill, III, 304-5.

⁸⁷ Ibid, II, 387. III, 318, 320.

⁸⁸ Orme, II, 182.

⁸⁹ Hill, III, 316.

⁹⁰ Thornton, I, 262.

⁹¹ Mill, III, 192.

⁹² Wheeler, *Early Records of British India*, 260.

lity in words, though he had nothing but treachery in his heart,⁹³ and he was retained by the nawab as the commander of his army. It was a great blunder on the part of Siraj-ud-daulah; he had to pay for it the heaviest price. 'If the Soubah erred before', observes Scratton rightly, "in abandoning the French, he doubly erred now, in admitting a suspicious friend to continue in the charge of a great body of troops of whom self-defence would have taught to make use of for his own preservation."⁹⁴ Duped by Mir Jafar's profession of loyalty, Siraj-ud-daulah marched with his army⁹⁵ for the inevitable conflict with the English, in the mango grove of Plassey⁹⁶ on the Bhagirathi. There were in his party also 40 to 50 Frenchmen. The equipments and preparations of the army were adequate and it occupied a strong position at Plassey. But "what avails pomp and parade", comments Scratton significantly, "where the heart is not fired by loyalty to their prince, or love to their country?"⁹⁷ Indeed, the nawab's camp and court were both unreliable, and treachery was rampant all round.

The select committee in Calcutta saw the secret treaty on 10 June. Watts fled away from Qasimbazar on 11 June. Clive now threw off the mask and on 13 June marched forward to fight against the nawab at the head of an army of 3,000 men⁹⁸. As an immediate pretext for this Clive wrote a letter to the nawab on the same day wrongly charging him with violation of the terms of the treaty between them, but he did not mention his own intention to fight. Indeed, he wrote that he was going to Qassimbazar to 'put our disputes to arbitration' before Jagat Seth, Mir Jatar "and the rest of your great men".⁹⁹ Under cover of this duplicity Clive passed beyond Hughli, and occupied the town and fort of Katwa, almost without any opposition. He had a temporary hesitation at Katwa to march forward, as he was still uncertain about Mir Jatar's movements. He called there a council of war and himself voted with the majority against immediate advance. But

93 He wrote to Clive on 16 June after his meeting with the nawab: "...what we have agreed on must be done". (Hill, II, 414).

94 Scratton, 89.

95 50,000 infantry, 20,000 cavalry and 50 pieces of heavy cannon according to Scratton (*Reflections, etc.*, 90); 50,000 infantry, 18,000 cavalry and 50 pieces of cannon according to Orme (*Indostan*, II, 173); 35,000 infantry, 15,000 cavalry and 40 pieces of cannon according to Clive; 40,000 infantry and 20,000 cavalry according to Eyre Coota.

96 In the district of Nadia, West Bengal.

97 *Reflections, etc.*, 91.

98 650 European infantry, 100 topasses (European gunners), 150 artillery men, including 50 sailors, and 2,100 sepoys, with 8 pieces of cannon (Hill, I, cxlvii). See Orme, *Indostan*, II, 174.

99 Scratton, 87-88. Forrest, *Bengal and Madras Papers*, II.

after some reflection he soon changed his mind and setting out from Katwa in the morning of 22 June reached Plassey at about midnight.

The battle began in the morning of 23 June. The nawab's cause was foredoomed to failure, as about 45,000 of the troops were under the command of three traitor confederates, Rai Durlabhram on the right, Yar Latif Khan in the centre and Mir Jafar on the left. At the beginning heavy firing from the nawab's side caused some anxiety to the English. After half an hour's fighting Clive determined to shelter his troops in the grove. At eleven o'clock he, in consultation with his principal officers, decided that the cannonade should be continued during the day and that an attack should be made on the nawab's camp at midnight.

But Siraj-ud-daulah's perverse destiny soon gave a new turn to the situation and blasted whatever chances he seemed to have till then in his favour. The death of Mir Madan, his most faithful general, in the thick of fighting by a chance shot placed him in a veritable crisis. Greatly disconcerted at this, he turned to Mir Jafar again and made a piteous appeal to him for help at that critical moment. The traitor showed apparent sincerity and advised him to recall those faithful troops who were engaged in fighting for him, while on the same day he wrote to Clive to push on without delay, or not to postpone the attack at any rate beyond the night. Following the advice of Mir Jafar, the nawab ordered Mohan Lal to fall back and retreat when "he was closely engaged with the enemy, his cannon was served with effect and his infantry having availed themselves of some covers and other ground were pouring a quantity of bullets in the enemy rank". Mohan Lal remonstrated; he pointed out that "this was not the time to retreat, that the action was far advanced, that whatever might happen would happen now, and that should he turn his head to march back to camp, his people would disperse and perhaps abandon themselves to an open flight".¹⁰⁰ But the loyal general's protest was fruitless; Mir Jafar's baneful advice prevailed, for the nawab could not then in utter bewilderment discern its true nature. His pressing and repeated orders forced Mohan Lal to retreat from the position where he had advanced. This at once produced a panic among the nawab's troops and caused a general stampede. The nawab, almost at his wit's end, now turned to another conspirator, Rai Durlabh, who gave him advice of insidious nature. Completely unnerved at that hour of crisis, Siraj-ud-daulah listened to that treacherous counsel, ordered his troops to retire inside the entrenchment, and himself left the battlefield in hurry on an elephant for the city of Murshidabad where he reached

¹⁰⁰ *Siyar* (Eng. trans.), II, 233.

about midnight. Thus "the work commenced by one of the conspirators (Mir Jatar) was completed by another (Durlabhram)".¹⁰¹

END OF SIRAJ-UD-DAULAH

After the nawab's sudden flight the inevitable followed. It was no longer possible to rally his troops. The English easily captured the almost deserted camp.¹⁰² The next day Mir Jatar appeared before Clive, who greeted him as subadar of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. At Murshidabad Siraj-ud-daulah found none, not even his own kith and kin, willing to stand by him faithfully in that moment of dire calamity. He took at last a desperate resolution. He went out of his capital in a changed dress with one faithful eunuch and his devoted consort Lutfunnisa Begam in his company. Probably his destination was Bihar where he hoped to get assistance from his faithful naib nazim, Ramnarain, and also from Jean Law, who had already received a rather belated communication from the nawab. But inexorable destiny proved to be unsparing to him even when he was a miserable fugitive. Fatigued and hungry, he halted near Rajmahal for a meal and was recognized there on 30 June by a Muslim *faqir* named Dana Shah, who is said to have been previously insulted by him. He immediately brought it to the notice of the faujdar of Rajmahal, brother of Mir Jatar, and was dragged as a captive to Murshidabad with various indignities.¹⁰³ Here was the climax of his tragedy. Ghulam Husain writes, "Every one of them he entreated (whom a few days before he might have disdained to speak with), to obtain a pension for him, and a corner of ground where he might live forgotten, but no one heard him."¹⁰⁴ Under the influence of his enemies, particularly Miran, son of Mir Jafar, a wretch named Muhammad Beg on whose gratitude he had some claims because of various favours he and his grandfather had bestowed upon him, brutally murdered him at the beginning of July.¹⁰⁵

CONSEQUENCES OF PLASSEY

Mir Jafar had already entered Murshidabad on 25 June and Clive reaching there a few days later had proclaimed him subahdar of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. The Company obtained the zamindari of the

¹⁰¹ Thornton, I, 242.

¹⁰² Broome, *Bengal Army*, 148-49. According to him there was a total casualty of 72 on the English side, including 7 Europeans killed. In the nawab's army about 500 men were killed and about the same number wounded.

¹⁰³ *Muzaffar Nama*, 64a.

¹⁰⁴ *Siyar* (Eng. trans.), II, 239.

¹⁰⁵ The dates usually given are 2 or 3 July. Scrafton gives 4 July.

24 parganas against the opposition of the tenants and proprietors, 'who were averse to the introduction of new masters who being merchants might wish to appropriate' to themselves the salt trade of that area.¹⁰⁶ They also established a mint at Calcutta, rupees being coined there for the first time on 19 August 1757.¹⁰⁷ As for the compensation money promised by Mir Jafar to the English, it was stipulated that half (Rs 11,350,000) of it should be paid by the last day of October and the remainder within three years in equal half-yealy instalments. Orme notes that the English Company received 7,271,666 *sicca* rupees on 6 July, 1,655,350 *sicca* rupees on 9 August, as also cash, gold and jewels worth 1,599,737 *sicca* rupees on 30 August; but Rs 584,905 of the stipulated half still remained to be paid.¹⁰⁸ The members of the council in Calcutta were also severally rewarded with pecuniary presents.¹⁰⁹ The financial gains of the English from this revolution were indeed substantial. Scrafton exultingly observes: "These glorious successes have brought near three millions of monev to the nation; for, properly speaking, almost the whole of the immense sums received from the Subah finally centres in England." The amount which fell into the Company's hands (he says) was large enough to enable it to 'carry on the whole trade in India (China excepted) for threc years together, without sending out one ounce of bullion'. Moreover, vast sums were remitted through foreign companies which weighed in favour of the English Company in the balance of trade.¹¹⁰ Thus ensued a serious economic drain on the resources of Bengal. The increasing political influence of the English Company after Plassey also aggravated the various abuses in the spheres of Bengal's trade and industries. All this hastened the economic decline of this once flourishing province.

As a battle Plassey is not, writes Malleson, 'a matter to be very proud of'. It was not anything more than a mere skirmish, and it was not a 'fair fight'.¹¹¹ Its verdict in favour of the English was not the outcome of any extraordinary generalship of Clive, though his single-minded devotion to the cause of his masters and his spirit of enterprise are really deserving of praise. What chiefly contributed to British victory at Plassey was the treachery of the nawab's generals.

The results of the battle were, however, profoundly significant. They ushered in a new epoch in the history of Bengal by making the English the virtual masters of that province and thus paving the way for their

¹⁰⁶ Orme, *Indostan*, II, 188.

¹⁰⁷ Scrafton, 97.

¹⁰⁸ Orme, II, 187-88.

¹⁰⁹ *Third Report*, 120.

¹¹⁰ Scrafton, 101.

¹¹¹ Malleson, *The Decisive Battles of India*, 68.

ultimate supremacy over the whole of India. Plassey certainly did not make the British empire of India an accomplished fact; much still remained to be done. But there is no doubt that its seeds were well sown as a result of this battle on the fertile soil of Bengal; here they found proper facilities for nourishment to produce ultimately a splendid harvest for the English. Plassey gave them plenty of immediate advantages to which we have already referred and greatly enhanced their power and influence. All this, particularly their control over the vast wealth of what Clive correctly described as 'three provinces abounding in the most valuable production of nature and art,'¹¹² immensely contributed to their victories in their war in Peninsular India against the French in the course of the next few years as also against their enemies in Maharashtra and Mysore in the few subsequent decades. Conscious of the brilliant prospects of the numerous advantages gained by the English Company as a result of Plassey Clive even suggested to Pitt early in 1759 the advisability of the establishment of direct control of the British Crown over the Company's possessions in Bengal.¹¹³ Pitt felt that the time was not ripe for it. But various favourable factors henceforth facilitated the rapid transformation of Bengal into a British protectorate.

MIR JAFAR'S FIRST ADMINISTRATION (1757-60)

The new subahdar, Mir Jafar, was a mere figurehead, a puppet in the hands of his virtual overlords, the English. It was Clive who actually controlled all affairs in the state. Clive's position was then rather anomalous. When he won the battle of Plassey he was technically a servant of the governor and council of Madras. But in June 1758 the council in Calcutta, on their own initiative, elected him governor of Bengal, and this position was legalised by the Company towards the end of that year.

Mir Jafar's position was precarious. Owing his elevation to others and personally devoid of administrative capacity, the new nawab could not inspire anybody's confidence, nor could he deal satisfactorily with the multifarious problems that arose in consequence of a sudden political revolution in the country. Even Clive had a poor opinion of him.¹¹⁴ Embarrassed by lack of adequate finance, he could not satisfy the exaggerated expectation of those who intended to reap good profit for the assistance they had rendered to him in getting the *masnad*. The unholy *entente* between him and his collaborators

¹¹² Clive's letter to Pitt, 7 January 1759.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

began to dissolve soon. In fact, his foolish attempt to remove or suppress influential officers like Durlabhram, the diwan, Ramnarain, deputy governor of Bihar, Ramram Singh, faujdar of Midnapore, and some others, produced disaffection against him in different parts of the Subah. Clive, prompted by considerations of safeguarding the Company's interests, offered his mediation and succeeded in pacifying those officers and the other malcontents. In return he obtained from the nawab the monopoly of saltpetre manufacture in Bihar for the Company, which was indeed a very valuable gain.

But as self-interest was the only key to the Plassey bargain, no hearty co-operation between Mir Jafar and the English was possible. In fact, though indebted to the latter for the throne, Mir Jafar soon began to chafe under the restraints imposed on him by Clive. To counteract what some English writers have described as anti-English designs of Mir Jafar, the English were 'necessitated to strengthen' themselves, writes Scrafton, 'by forming a party in his court to be a continued check upon him'.¹¹⁵ It was chiefly out of this motive that they mediated in the nawab's quarrels with his officers.

SHAH ALAM'S FIRST INVASION

Coupled with the absence of internal tranquillity in the province was the menace of invasion from outside its limits to ward off which Mir Jatar's government was forced to rely on British military support. Prince Ali Gauhar (later entitled Shah Alam II), the eldest and ablest son of the emperor Alamgir II, was a victim of the malignant hostility of the jealous and selfish wazir, Imad-ul-mulk. Compelled to leave Delhi, he became virtually a refugee. While halting at Miranpur in the middle Doab for some months in 1758 he received promises of help from Shuja-ud-daulah, nawab of Oudh, and Muhammad Quli Khan, Shuja-ud-daulah's first cousin and the imperial governor of Allahabad, for invading Bihar. He was also instigated by Balwant Singh, raja of Banaras, Sundar Singh, raja of Tikari, and Pahlwan Singh, zamindar of Bhojpur.¹¹⁶ But to prevent Ali Gauhar from asserting any legal claim on Bihar Imad-ul-mulk prevailed upon the helpless emperor to confer the office of suahdar of Bihar upon another prince named Hidayat Bakhsh and to declare the former as a rebel.

Accompanied by Muhammad Quli's army and some newly recruited troops, Shah Alam entered Patna in the third week of March 1759 and soon besieged that city. On 3 April Jean Law, on receiving an

¹¹⁵ Scrafton, 104.

¹¹⁶ Broome, *Bengal Army*, 266.

invitation from Shah Alam, hastened from Chhatrapur to his camp. But some cautious steps and timely precautions on the part of Ramnarain, the able deputy governor of Bihar, frustrated Shah Alam's attempt. His appeal to the English in Calcutta for help was fruitful. A body of the nawab's troops under the command of his son Sadiq Ali Khan, popularly called Miran, accompanied by a party under Colonel Clive, crossed the frontier of Bihar near Teliagarhi. An advanced detachment commanded by Ensign John Methews had reached Patna on 5 April. A few days later Muhammad Quli left for his province as in his absence Shuja-ud-daulah had treacherously occupied the fort of Allahabad. Pahlwan Singh was defeated by Ramnarain on 10 May with the assistance of the Bengal troops under Miran. Without friends and resources the baffled princes retreated from Bihar within a few days.

In graceful recognition of Clive's services on this occasion Mir Jafar managed to procure for him the title of *Omrah* from the shadow emperor and conferred on him, as a personal jagir, the zamindari of the districts south of Calcutta, then rented by the British Company. This grant came to be known as 'Clive's Jagheer'. Acceptance of private presents and of jagir from the nawab was not a dignified transaction on the part of Clive. Money paid to him and to some other members of the Company's services caused further depletion of the nawab's treasury. These transactions set a very pernicious precedent for the Company's officers. Clive subsequently argued in defence of the receipt of gifts that the Company's servants were then 'at liberty to receive presents in the absence of any "covenant" forbidding it, and that presents not extorted from a prince but voluntarily given by him, who could 'do with his money what he pleases', were not 'dishonourable'. But Mir Jafar was by no means a free agent; circumstances had made him a puppet of Clive whom he had to conciliate for safeguarding his own position. So what he paid to Clive should not be construed as his voluntary gift or present. "They were moneys bargained for the sale of a province under a transaction stained with falsehood and treachery throughout."¹¹⁷

SHAH ALAM'S SECOND INVASION

Towards the end of 1759 Ali Gauhar once again marched into Bihar after having already proclaimed himself emperor (24 December 1759) on getting the news of his father's murder at Delhi. This time he had a local supporter—a devoted adherent—named Kamgar Khan, an

¹¹⁷ Elphinstone, *Rise of the British Power in India*, (ed.-Colebrooke), 313.

Afghan zamindar of the Gaya district. Clive did not fail to take prompt steps on this occasion too. He arranged to send to Bihar, on 18 January 1760, a force composed of 300 European infantry, two battalions of sepoys, and 50 European artillerymen with 6 field pieces under the command of Major Caillaud. This party had with it a portion of the nawab's army under Sadiq Ali Khan consisting of 15,000 Indian cavalry and infantry with 25 guns.¹¹⁸

Even before the arrival of this reinforcement, Ramnaraian had opposed the imperialists at Masunpur (4 miles east of Futwah and near Baikanthapur). He was, however, defeated there due to the treachery of three of his commanders and had to retreat to his fort after receiving several wounds. Four companies of sepoys, marching to help Ramnaraian, were destroyed with their three European officers. The imperial army advanced to within the borders of Patna on 17 February but had not the courage to attack the city. Fighting with great bravery and skill the English troops under Major Caillaud defeated the imperialists at Sherpur (4 miles south-east of Bakhtiaripur railway station) on 22 February. But owing to the refusal of Miran's cavalry to push on the fighting, Shah Alam was able to retreat to the city of Bihar in the night with his vanquished troops. Major Caillaud fixed his camp on the river bank between Patna and Barh, but Miran whiled away a few days at Patna in merry-making before joining the major on 29 February.

The emperor, under the able guidance¹ of Kamgar Khan, and invited by some other disaffected zamindars, marched into Bengal with a view to making a surprise attack on the defenceless city of Murshidabad. Most probably he received promises of co-operation also from the Dutch in Bengal. His forces now consisted of light cavalry, 'unencumbered by artillery or heavy luggage'.¹¹⁹ To avoid opposition on the way by his enemies he did not go by the usual high road leading into Bengal along the course of the Ganges and through the hills of the Santal Parganas, but pushed through the little known hills and jungles of south-eastern Bihar and further on by way of Gidhaur, Deoghar and Mankar. At Bishnupur in the Bankura district in Bengal he was joined by a Maratha army under Sheo Bhat Sathe. But the emperor committed two serious mistakes. He did not follow his original objective, that is, an attack on the metropolis of Bengal; nor did he take care to oppose immediately the army under Mir Jafar and a detachment from Calcutta under Captain Spear that had advanced to check him.

¹¹⁸ Broome, *Bengal Army*, 275-76.

¹¹⁹ Ironside's *Narrative*.

Major Caillaud following on the nawab's track 'through thick jungle of the wildest description, across unbridged streams, over hills and valleys, and through difficult and unknown passes'¹²⁰ joined Mir Jafar and a detachment sent from Calcutta at Mangalkot (20 miles north of Burdwan town) on 4 April. Three days later they had an indecisive engagement with the vanguard of the emperor's army which had crossed the Damodar river and followed it in its march to Belkhas, opposite the emperor's encampment. Kamgar Khan and the emperor were now so much disheartened that they set fire to their camp and 'withdrew from the province by the same track and with the same haste'¹²¹ as had marked their entry into it. Joined by Law at Bihar¹²² the emperor and Kamgar Khan proceeded towards Patna and invested it. The city was then ill-equipped for defence; but Major Caillaud deputed there on 16 April a body of troops under Captain Knox. After a surprisingly quick march (traversing 300 miles in 13 days) Major Knox reached the city. The emperor still remained in south Bihar for two months. Law's junction with him did not improve his position. Finding no further prospect of success, he retired from the province and halted on the bank of the Jamuna in August 1760. One of his partisans, Khadim Husain Khan, who had usurped the government of Purnea, while marching to join him had been defeated by Knox at Hajipur on 19 June.

ANGLO-DUTCH CONFLICT

A new disturbing factor developed at this juncture in Bengal politics. The Dutch in Bengal, jealous of the growing influence of their English rivals after Plassey, sought to strike a blow against it. In 1759 six or seven Dutch vessels carrying European as well as Malaya troops arrived at the mouth of the river Hugli. Some writers hold that growing restive under Clive's domination Mir Jafar encouraged the Dutch on this occasion. Holwell, for example, writes that the Dutch entered into negotiation with Mir Jafar for 'transporting troops from Batavia into those provinces, that with their united force a stop might be put to the power of the English'.¹²³ But the Calcutta council observed in its letter to the court of directors dated 22 October 1759 that the Dutch attempt to 'disturb the tranquillity' of the province by introducing troops was 'unknown to the Subah' and added: "This

¹²⁰ Broome, *Bengal Army*, 289.

¹²¹ Ironside's *Narrative*.

¹²² Broome, 296.

¹²³ Holwell's Memorial to Select Committee upon arrival of Vansittart to succeed him in the government. (*Original Papers relating to the Disturbances in Bengal*, I, 8-13).

ill-judged step has greatly exasperated him against them and we have reason to believe that matters will shortly be accommodated by those forces being obliged to leave the River." Thus the nawab cannot be accused of forming an anti-English conspiracy with the Dutch. In fact, Mir Jafar sent repeated prohibitions to the Dutch against hasty action and sided with the English against them.

Clive took timely and proper steps to oppose the Dutch. Under his instructions, Colonel Forde fought with them on 25 November 1759 in the plains of Bedara, almost midway between Chandernagar and Chinsura. The action was short and decisive, resulting in the defeat of the Dutch. They then proposed to the English terms of peace to which there was a favourable response without delay. On 3 December they 'disavowed the proceedings of their ships below, acknowledged themselves the aggressors', and agreed to pay 10 lakhs of rupees as an indemnity for the losses suffered and expenses incurred by the English on account of the war. The English agreed that "these terms being fulfilled they would restore the ships, stores and prisoners they had captured, except those of the latter who desired to enter their service".¹²⁴ Three days after the battle Miran had marched with an army near Chinsura avowedly to punish the Dutch for the disturbance they had caused. But Clive intervened at the request of the Dutch, and on 5 December a treaty was concluded between the nawab's government and the Dutch. The nawab agreed to permit the Dutch to carry on their trade as before on their due observance of the following conditions: "that they shall never meditate war, introduce or enlist troops or raise fortifications in the country, that they shall be allowed to keep up one hundred and twenty-five European soldiers, and no more, for service of their factories of Chinsura, Kasimbazar and Patna, (and) that they shall forthwith send their ships and remaining troops out of the country".¹²⁵

Bedara dealt a crushing blow to the ambition of the Dutch 'to rival the political power of the English in Bengal'. Forde "decisively foiled", writes Malleson, "the attempt to establish an Indo-Batavian empire".¹²⁶ Economically too the Dutch were hard hit. Their commerce in Bengal, which had been previously very profitable, now ceased to be so.¹²⁷ As for the English, the results of Bedara gave them relief from a great menace. "Thus ended an affair", observed Clive, "which, had the event been different, threatened us in its consequences with utter destruction." Bedara, in fact, supplemented Plassey and was

¹²⁴ Clive's Narrative : Malcolm, *Life of Clive*, II, 88.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ Malleson, *Decisive Battles of India*, 124.

¹²⁷ Stavorinus, *Voyage to the East Indies*, I, 499-501

a forward step towards the growth of British political supremacy in Bengal. Broome exultingly remarks: "Such was the brilliant victory of Beddarah, marked by an extraordinary degree of skill and courage, and most important in its results."¹²⁸

REVOLUTION OF 1760

Clive sailed for England on 25 February 1760, when the Company's position in Bengal was still very uncertain, the administrative system was hopelessly in a muddle and honeycombed with abuses, and the nawab's exchequer was more exhausted than before. The Company increased its pressure upon the nawab for full payment of the stipulated instalments of money; it was in difficulties because it had not then been supplied with adequate money by the home authorities who had the impression that Bengal was an inexhaustible source of wealth for their men. Moreover, Bengal was required to send supplies to meet the needs of the Company's settlements at Madras and Bombay.¹²⁹ The court of directors wrote to the Calcutta council on 3 March 1758, "It is a most amazing thing to consider that a settlement so abounding with industrious inhabitants and flourishing in its trade . . . should produce so little profit to the Company."

Lack of sound governance, for which both the nawab and the Company were responsible, caused various other complications. For non-payment of arrears of pay the nawab's army had become discontented as well as clamorous. Major Caillaud could pacify them temporarily after the death of Miran on 22 July 1760 as a result of a lightning stroke, but soon they became openly mutinous. To add to the evils of maladministration, the abuses in the field of Bengal's trade, caused chiefly by various illegal practices on the part of the Company's servants, had grown enormously at the cost of the customs revenue of the nawab's government and the interests of the indigenous merchants. Complaints poured in from different corners of the province against the oppressions of the Company's people, but there was no redress in any way. Mir Jafar's feeble voice evaporated in their air.¹³⁰ In short, the whole province had 'fallen into a state of utter anarchy and misery'.

Mir Jafar's failure to deal satisfactorily with the tangled problems of administration in that transitional epoch and his inability to cater fully to the demands of the Company cost him the throne. The English soon ceased to regard him as a useful tool. Rather, his removal was

¹²⁸ Broome, *Bengal Army*, 270.

¹²⁹ Vansittart, *Narrative*, I, 37-38.

¹³⁰ K. K. Datta, *Bengal Subah*, I, 305-10.

considered to be a pressing necessity by the select committee in Calcutta, largely at the instigation of Holwell, who acted as governor from the time of Clive's departure till the arrival of the governor-designate, Vansittart, on 27 July 1760. Holwell levelled various charges against Mir Jatar, some of which he concocted¹³¹ in his own usual way. As a matter of fact, to promote their own interests the English conspired to effect another revolution in Bengal in 1760. This time the man of their choice for the nawabship of Bengal was Mir Qasim (Qasim Ali Khan), son-in-law of Mir Jafar. Mir Qasim was undoubtedly an able man, with experience of Bengal politics for several years, and he had already given proof of his administrative ability as faujdar of Rangpur and Purnea.

The select committee in Calcutta entered into a treaty¹³² with Mir Qasim on 27 September 1760. He promised to clear all the outstanding dues of the Company and to assign them the revenues of the districts of Burdwan, Midnapur and Chittagong for the maintenance of an army for the defence of Bengal. The Company agreed to help him in being appointed naib subahdar and even in securing the *masnad* of Bengal. Mir Qasim soon left Calcutta for Murshidabad. To give effect to the terms of the treaty, the new governor, Vansittart, and Major Caillaud also reached Murshidabad on 14 October and demanded Mir Jatar's consent to their plan for the appointment of Mir Qasim as deputy governor. The old nawab refused to yield to their suggestion, but under pressure and threat he abdicated in favour of Mir Qasim, who was proclaimed subahdar of Bengal on 20 October. Mir Jatar left Murshidabad on 22 October for Calcutta to live there as a pensioner of the new government.

Mir Jafar did not deserve a better fate, but the manner in which he was set aside was a reflection on the Company's political methods. The revolution of 1760 evoked criticisms from some contemporaries. Several members of the council in Calcutta protested against this arrangement 'to dethrone a man we were bound to support by the most solemn ties, divine and human', and observed that it would put 'an indelible stain upon our national character'. The fact that the makers of this revolution, like those responsible for that of 1757, accepted personal presents undoubtedly 'casts a sordid air over the whole business'.¹³³

¹³¹ Letter to Court, 30 September 1766. Long, *Selections from Unpublished Records*, No. 837.

¹³² Vansittart, *Narrative*, I, 101-4.

¹³³ Cambridge History of India, V, 168-9,

SHAH ALAM'S THIRD INVASION

The English and Mir Qasim got a convenient opportunity to secure for the new arrangement the formal consent of the Mughal emperor, the fiction of whose sovereignty was then sought to be exploited by all aspirants for political power in India. Shah Alam II invaded Bihar for the third time on the expiry of the rainy season in 1760, accompanied by Jean Law and his French followers. But this attempt too proved to be as abortive as the other two. On 15 January 1761 Major Carnac, who had come to Patna as commander of the Company's troops, inflicted a defeat on the emperor's force at Suan, six miles west of Bihar city. Law and his men were also captured by him. The emperor was in an utterly helpless condition; he was then 'reduced so low as to be much more an object of pity than of fear'.¹³⁴ He solicited friendship of the English, who lost no time to get the late Bengal revolution legalized. Shah Alam saw Major Carnac at Gaya on 6 February and was escorted by him to Patna. After pacifying Birbhum, Mir Qasim hastened to Patna, interviewed the emperor on 12 March and obtained from him formal confirmation in the office of subahdar of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa by promising to pay him in return a yearly tribute of 24 lakhs of rupees.¹³⁵ The emperor left Patna on 12 April in response to a promise of help from Shuja-ud-daulah of Awadh for the recovery of Delhi.

MIR QASIM'S ADMINISTRATION

The task before Mir Qasim was indeed highly complicated and difficult. The state exchequer was almost empty with numerous demands upon it. The army was mutinous, and several leading members of the aristocracy had openly defied the government's authority. "It was high time for reform", as Vansittart wrote to Ellis on 23 October 1760.¹³⁶ The new nawab proved himself equal to the occasion by virtue of his personal qualities. Much more intelligent than his predecessor, he at once realized the need of having a solvent exchequer and an efficient army, the two essential requisites of a strong and successful executive. He applied himself with great zeal and diligence to regulate the financial and other affairs of the state so that he soon paid some lakhs of rupees to the English Company out of which the latter seven made a timely remittance of two lakhs and a half to Madras for the service of the English army before Pondicherry. He also clear-

¹³⁴ Carnac's letter to Secret Committee, 6 March 1761. Vansittart, *Narrative*, I, 185.

¹³⁵ *Sivar* (Eng. trans.), II, 408.

¹³⁶ Vansittart, *Narrative*, I, 138.

ed off a large portion of the arrears due to the army at Murshidabad.¹³⁷

Mir Qasim's 'natural talents were best suited'¹³⁸ for revenue administration. To replenish the exhausted treasury he compelled the old officers to disgorge the sums they had misappropriated. While at Patna (in 1761) he demanded adjustment of accounts regarding Bihar revenues for the last four years from its naib nazim, raja Ramnarain. Vansittart at first tried to have the matter amicably settled in view of Ramnarain's attachment to the Company. But Ramnarain, supported by Major Caranc and Colonel Coote whose relations with the nawab were not quite happy, evaded compliance with the nawab's demands. The result was his dismissal from office. Mir Qasim framed a budget of the income and expenses of the state and prudently abolished or curtailed some unnecessary expenses, such as the expenses of the managerie department.¹³⁹ He strictly enforced his revenue measures some of which were rather harsh.¹⁴⁰ "His principle is said to have been", writes Francis, "that whatever the ryots paid should be the property of Government; thereby totally excluding all zamindars. His officers acted accordingly. Their fear of him was so great, both from his skill in accounts and the rigour of his government, that his orders were punctually obeyed; so that partly from the direct product of the lands and partly by fines and confiscations it is believed that for two years, he drew almost double the ancient revenue from the country." In 1760 he imposed an "additional tax of 1½ annas of 3/32 part of the original crown rents; and estimated this addition at Sicca rupees 4,50,164-2-9, which being added to the former revenue of 1,32,82,960-2-17-1 made the whole of these revenues in his time amount to 1,37,83,124-5-6-1 or £ 1,792,172 sterling". He also brought to the credit of the provincial treasury 'all such local collections as had been hitherto concealed from state auditing'.¹⁴¹

The army was effectively reorganized by the nawab. He placed it under the supreme command of the Armenian, Gurgin Khan, brother of the famous Armenian diplomat and merchant, Khwajah Petrus, with orders to recognize its different branches on European model. Gurgin Khan performed this task creditably. An able Muslim officer, Muhammad Taqi Khan, had also an important share in the work of army reform. The nawab admitted a number of foreigners into his military service, the more important of them being Sumroo, Gentil,

¹³⁷ Vansittart, *Narrative*, I, 178.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.* II, 187

¹³⁹ *Siyar* (Eng. trans.), II, 391. *Khulasat-ut-Tawarikh*, 926-36.

¹⁴⁰ *Muzaffar Nama*, 154b.

¹⁴¹ Firminger, *Introduction to Fifth Report*, I, CXV.

Marcat and Anatoon, and 'got ready a vast quantity of firelocks or artillery'.¹⁴² He arranged for manufacture of such arms and ammunition at Monghyr as were not in any way inferior to those imported from Europe.¹⁴³ But with all that the nawab did to make his army efficient, there lurked in it an inherent weakness due largely to its heterogeneous composition.

For due enforcement of governmental control over the whole subah Mir Qasim followed a stern policy of repression towards those zamindars who had been trying for some time to shake off their dependence. With the assistance of English troops under Major Yorke and Captain White he chastised Asad Zaman Khan, the powerful zamindar of Birbhum, who in alliance with Tilak Chand, the raja of Burdwan,¹⁴⁴ and with supplies from Damodar Singh of Bishnupur in the Bankura district and the raja of Ramghur, had often defied the nawab and the English Company. The nawab further adopted stringent measures against the zamindars of Bihar, particularly those of Bhojpur (Shahabad),¹⁴⁵ who had been traditionally refractory. After exacting obedience from some of the Bihar zamindars, he personally marched into the Bhojpur area at the head of a large army and captured all the important forts there, whereupon Pahalwan Singh and the other Shahabad zamindars fled away¹⁴⁶ to Ghazipur or into the dominions of Balwant Singh of Banaras. He appointed his own revenue-collectors in the Bhojpur estates, placed garrisons in the important forts there, and 'stationed a considerable force at each of the passes from the next province'.¹⁴⁷ The zamindar of Bettiah, who had become rather unruly, was reduced to submission by the nawab and Rohtasgarh, a place of great strategic importance, was brought under his control.¹⁴⁸

With the measures noted above Mir Qasim eradicated to a considerable extent some of those evils which were responsible for discrediting Mir Jafar's government. Vansittart recorded the following estimate of his administration: "He discharged the Company's debt, and the heavy arrears of his army, retrenched the expenses of his court, which had before consumed the income of his predecessors, and secured his own authority over the country by reducing the

142 *Reflections on the Present Commotion in Bengal*, 9-10.

143 *Siyar* (Eng. trans.), II, 421.

144 Long, 238-42. *Calendar of Persian Correspondence*, I, 51-52.

145 *Siyar* (Eng. trans.), II, 423. *Muzaffar Nama*, 161b. *Khulasat-ut-Tawarikh*, 104a-105a.

146 *Calendar of Persian Correspondence*, I, 141, 147.

147 Gleig, *Memoirs of Warren Hastings*, I, 114.

148 *Siyar* (Eng. trans.), II, 437. *Calendar of Persian Correspondence*, I, 155.

power of the zamindars, who were before continual disturbers of peace."¹⁴⁹ Ghulam Husain's testimony is that though the debased atmosphere of the age, surcharged with the vices of treachery and duplicity, had made Mir Qasim extremely suspicious and to some extent cruel, yet he had 'admirable qualifications' that balanced his bad ones. "In unravelling the intricacies of affairs of government and especially the knotty mysteries of finance, in examining and determining private differences, in establishing regular payment for his troops and for his household, in honouring and rewarding men of merit and men of learning, in adjusting his expenditure between the extremities of parsimony and prodigality, and in knowing intuitively where he must spend freely and where with moderation,—in all these qualifications, he was an incomparable man indeed, and the most extraordinary prince of his age."¹⁵⁰ Even Karam Ali, the author of *Muzaffar Nama*, who certainly was not a favourable critic of Mir Qasim, observes that the nawab's 'fame and authority had spread over the whole of Bengal'. He further adds, "During his time the wolf and the lamb drank water in one place, the rebels were suppressed, and the army was strong and dependable."¹⁵¹

MIR QASIM'S WAR WITH THE ENGLISH

Though undoubtedly a capable ruler, Mir Qasim did not get a fair chance in the midst of some adverse circumstances which created a party in the council at Calcutta opposed to him from the very beginning of his administration. Vansittart's appointment as governor of Bengal had caused the jealousy of some senior servants of the Company in Bengal who considered their claims to have been superseded. There was no unanimity among the members of the council. "A party thus existed, with feelings adverse to the governor; and they soon became a party opposed to his measures."¹⁵² After the dismissal of Sumner, McGuire and Playdell in August 1761 under orders of the court of directors, Vansittart found himself in a minority in matters regarding which differences of opinion arose in the council. Personal passions triumphed over prudence and moderation, and a section of the council remained all along prejudiced against Mir Qasim, who was supported by Vansittart and his party. Mir Qasim, on his part,

¹⁴⁹ Vansittart, *Narrative*, III, 381-82. For a similar estimate by Hastings vide Monckton Jones, *Warren Hastings in Bengal*, 68-70, and Gleig, *Memoirs of Warren Hastings*, I, 512-54.

¹⁵⁰ Sivar (Eng. trans.), II, 432.

¹⁵¹ *Muzaffar Nama*, 143b

¹⁵² Mill, III, 309.

did not like to be a servile agent of the Company; he tried to assert his position as the real ruler of the province by bringing all its affairs under his own control. This could not be tolerated by most of the members of the council, especially because the nawab's attempt to regulate the trade of the province clashed with their own private interests in it. "A majority of the Council viewed with jealous eyes", writes Verelst, "every act of the nawab's government. They considered all resistance to the privileges they claimed, as a settled determination to subvert the power of the Company; and passion thus uniting with interest, they urged a measure of national policy with the little peevish petulance of a personal quarrel."¹⁵³

Increasing abuse of *dastuks* by the Company's servants for their private trade, various other objectionable practices on their part, and overgrown power assumed by the agents and *gomastas* of the English, proved to be highly detrimental to the economic interests of the people of the province; the nawab's government also suffered substantial loss of customs revenue.¹⁵⁴ "A trade was carried on", observes Verelst, "without payment of duties, in the prosecution of which infinite oppressions were committed. English agents and Gomastas, not contented with injuring the people, trampled on the authority of government, binding and punishing the Nawab's officers wherever they presumed to interfere."¹⁵⁵ No government worth the name could put up with this anomalous and prejudicial state of affairs.

Mir Qasim reasonably protested against all this, but the majority of the members of the council, with their judgement clouded by self-interest, unjustly asserted an extravagant claim of exemption from payment of duties on the strength of the *farman* of Farrukh-siyar by giving a wrong interpretation to it. The attempts of Mir Qasim, Vansittart and Hastings to effect a solution of the problem, through an arrangement whereby the Company's servants were to be permitted to carry on trade on payment of inland customs at the rate of 9 p.c. on the prime cost at the places where the goods could be procured, proved to be fruitless due to the uncompromising attitude and overbearing conduct of many of the servants of the Company.

On failure of compromise the nawab, with a view to safeguarding the interests of his government and those of the merchants of the province,¹⁵⁶ abolished duties altogether in March 1763 for two years. He well expressed his point of view in this matter in his letter to the

¹⁵³ Verelst, *View of Bengal*, 47.

¹⁵⁴ Nawab's letter to governor, received May 1762 (Vansittart, *Narrative*, II, 97-102); Nawab's letter to governor dated 5 March 1763 (*Ibid*, III, 37-41).

¹⁵⁵ Verelst, *View of Bengal*, 48.

¹⁵⁶ Public Proceedings, 22 March 1763

council, dated 22 March 1763: "The affair of the duty is as follows: on account of the oppression of the English gomastas, there has not so much as a single farthing been collected by way of duties. Nay, so far from it, you form collusions with some of my people, and exact fines from others. And many merchants, who ought to pay customs, have carried their goods duty free through your protection. Upon this account I have entirely given up the collection of duties, and removed all chowkeys wherever established."¹⁵⁷ The members of the council, with the exception of Vansittart and Hastings, came to the unreasonable decision that "this exemption was a breach of the Company's privileges and that the Nawab should be positively required to recall it, and collect duties as before from the country merchants and all other persons who had not the protection of the Company's Dustuck".¹⁵⁸ The nawab's patience was at last exhausted, and feelings on either side ran so high that a conflict became inevitable. The ill-advised and rash attack on Patna by Ellis, who had succeeded McGuire as chief of the English factory there and was not only a man of violent temper but also one of the bitterest political enemies of Vansittart, soon precipitated an open rupture and brought matters to the arbitrament of the sword.

To oppose the nawab, the English had been engaged in preparations since the middle of April 1763. On 18 June the council came to a definite resolution regarding posting of troops for this purpose.¹⁵⁹ On 5 July the English army under Major Adams marched from Gheratty; on 7 July war was formally declared against Mir Qasim by the council. Mir Jafar, 'the veteran intriguer',¹⁶⁰ was restored to nawabship on the same day by the council.¹⁶¹

Events moved speedily. In the first decisive action of the English army with the troops of the nawab, fought near Katwa on 9 July, the former inflicted a total defeat on the latter, and the nawab's brave general, Muhammad Taqi Khan, expired on the field of battle 'with an unfinished curse on the cowardice of his fellow-commanders upon his lips'.¹⁶² The city of Murshidabad fell under the control of the English army on 24 July and next morning Major Adams escorted the titular nawab, Mir Jafar, into Murshidabad. The two hostile armies fought next on the plains of Giria, near Suti, on 2 August. The battle here was most fiercely contested, but some factors crowned the efforts

157 Vansittart, *Narrative*, III, 85-86.

158 *Original Papers, etc.*, II, 124.

159 Vansittart, *Narrative*, III, 164, 277-78.

160 Malleson, *Decisive Battles*, 144.

161 Vansittart, *Narrative*, III, 328-29.

162 Broome, *Bengal Army*, 373-74.

of the English with success and enabled them to gain what has been described as 'one of the most brilliant victories on Indian military record'.¹⁶³ A more decisive action was soon fought at a strategic place called Udhuanala, situated a few miles to the south of Rajmahal. A European soldier, who had for some unknown reasons joined the nawab's army, betrayed the latter at this crucial moment by disclosing to the English a key passage for attacking his strong entrenchment. With this advantage the English troops made a successful onslaught on the nawab's army, which was soon overwhelmed (4-5 September).

This battle dealt a severe blow to Mir Qasim's position. On hearing of this disaster, he hastened to Monghyr, his new capital, followed by some bewildered and runaway troops. After staying there for two or three days to secure some of his effects, he proceeded towards Patna carrying his English prisoners with him. Monghyr was occupied by Major Adams on 1 October. Repeated reverses drove Mir Qasim into a state of desperation¹⁶⁴ and in a frantic mood he cruelly put to death some prominent Indians, including Ramnarain, the two Seth brothers, Narayan Umid Ray and raja Rajballabh with his sons, on suspicion of their complicity with the English: some of them were killed at Monghyr and the rest near Barh on the nawab's way to Patna. Harassed and baffled, Mir Qasim lost the natural balance of his character. Gripped by a spirit of vengeance¹⁶⁵ against the English whom he considered to be responsible for all his misfortunes, he caused a number of English prisoners to be massacred at Patna by Walter Rheinhardt, a German adventurer in his military service, known by the appellation of Samru or the Sombre. Dr Fullerton, the surgeon of the English factory at Patna, escaped the tragic fate of his countrymen there. Patna was, however, captured by the victorious English army and chased by them to the banks of the river Karamnasa, Mir Qasim crossed over to the dominions of Shuja-ud-daulah, the nawab-wazir of Awadh, for shelter and help (December 1763).

BATTLE OF BUXAR

There the fugitive nawab was not disappointed. He was able to enlist for himself the support of Shuja-ud-daulah and his guest, the emperor Shah Alam, II, in his plan for the recovery of his lost territories. None of Mir Qasim's allies were, however, prompted by genuinely friendly considerations in extending their assistance to him.

¹⁶³ Broome, *Bengal Army*, 379.

¹⁶⁴ Vansittart, *Narrative*, III, 397.

¹⁶⁵ Ib'd.

This was almost impossible in the vicious age characterized by gross unscrupulousness and utter debasement of human character.¹⁶⁶ As a matter of fact, for some time after the victory of the English over Mir Qasim, both Shah Alam II and Shuja-ud-daulah followed the policy of running with the hare and hunting with the hound. They exchanged correspondence with the English and Mir Jafar expressing satisfaction at their success while Mir Qasim was imploring their assistance. They even sent *sazads* to Mir Jafar formally recognizing there-in his restoration to subahdarship.¹⁶⁷ Motives of personal gain ultimately led the emperor and the wazir to accede to the request of Mir Qasim, who paid them 10 lakhs and 17 lakhs of rupees respectively. As for Shuja, he considered this occasion as a suitable opportunity to realize his own ambition, inherited from Safdar Jang, for extension of influence over Bihar. Previously Mir Qasim had been on his guard to check this design of Shuja-ud-daulah¹⁶⁸ though he apparently maintained friendly terms with him.¹⁶⁹ But he was helpless now. As for the refugee emperor, he joined the coalition probably with a view to preventing the establishment of the political authority of a new power in Bihar.

The allied troops marched into Bihar in April 1764. They were joined by an adventurous party of Frenchmen. The English were not in a position to present immediately a successful opposition to their enemy as their troops were mutinous. Major Adams had retired to Calcutta where he died later. His successor, Knox, also went there owing to indisposition, making over the command of the army temporarily to Captain Jennings, the seniormost officer present there, and did not survive long. Captain Jennings acted with vigour and promptitude to suppress a mutiny of the troops; but they could not be fully controlled. Major Carnac, who came to take command of the army on 5 March 1764, lacked requisite qualities for successful generalship. Moreover, his relations with the Calcutta council were not quite cordial and, as the Company's government thought, he did not receive adequate support from the restored nawab Mir Jafar.¹⁷⁰ During the first half of 1764 there were some indecisive engagements on the border of Bihar and within its boundary too. After one such engagement at Panchpahari, close to Patna, on 3 May there was exchange of negotiations between the two parties for an accommodation which, however, proved to be futile as the mutual demands were irreconcilable.

¹⁶⁶ *Siyar* (Eng. trans.), II, 520.

¹⁶⁷ *Calendar of Persian Correspondence*, I, pp. 260-74, 295-97.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 103, 104, 107, 119, 130.

¹⁶⁹ Gleig, *Memoirs of Warren Hastings*, I, 115.

¹⁷⁰ *Calendar of Persian Correspondence*, I, 'No. 2164.

Major Carnac was removed from the Company's service on 28 June by an order of the court of directors. The arrival of his successor, Major Hector Munro, gave a new turn to the military affairs of the Company; he succeeded in bringing the army into a state of order and discipline. Towards the end of September Shah Mal, custodian of the Rohtas fort, delivered it to the English on the latter's promises to grant protection for himself, his family and effects, to permit him to continue collection of revenues of the villages there as before, and to admit his people into service with retrospective pay from July.¹⁷¹

The final engagement of the two armies took place at Buxar on 23 October 1764. The battle was hotly contested for about four hours; but the allied troops suffered a crushing defeat. The emperor joined the English and was lodged by them in the Allahabad fort, which they occupied in his name on 11 February 1765, Banaras and Chunar having already passed under their control. Shuja-ud-daulah continued fighting for some time, but finding it to be of no avail, ran away to Ruhelkhand. Mir Qasim, deserted by Shuja-ud-daulah before the battle of Buxar and utterly dispirited by its outcome, was doomed to a tragic fate. Wandering from place to place, and subjected to various vicissitudes of fortune, he died miserably in extreme poverty¹⁷² in a village near Delhi on 6 June 1777, his last shawl being sold to pay for his coffin.

"Thus ended", writes Broome, "the famous battle of Buxar, on which depended the fate of India and which was as gallantly disputed as it was important in its results."¹⁷³ In congratulating Munro on his victory the Calcutta council wrote to him on 6 November 1764: "The signal victory you gained, so as at one blow utterly to defeat their designs against these provinces, is an event which does so much honour to yourself, Sir, in particular, and to all the officers and men under your command, and which, at the same time, is attended with such important advantages to the Company, as calls upon us to return you our sincere thanks."

The results of Buxar were certainly more decisive than those of Plassey. They enhanced the military and political prestige of the English, and by giving them highly valuable and significant material advantages finally established their unquestioned supremacy over the Bengal subah. Plassey resulted in the defeat of one Muslim subahdar of Bengal, chiefly due to the treachery of his own men, and the installation by the Company of a puppet who, lacking in opportunity as well as capacity for sound governance, dragged affairs into a hope-

¹⁷¹ Secret Proceedings, 24 September 1764.

¹⁷² Proceedings of Indian Historical Records Commission. X. 121-32.

¹⁷³ Bengal Army. 480.

less confusion. His successor, raised to the *masnad* by the English, seriously challenged the growing English influence in Bengal, which might have been completely ruined if the verdict of Buxar had gone against them. At Buxar the English emerged victorious not only against the ex-ruler of Bengal who, being endowed with much tact and intelligence had even after his expulsion a strong determination to undo the fruits of Major Adams' campaigns, but also against the nawab of Awadh who was also the wazir of the Delhi empire, who possessed considerable military resources and political sagacity, and the titular Mughal emperor, who in spite of all his misfortunes and reverses had still a political halo round his name. With their supremacy in Bengal fully ensured by the victory at Buxar the English were able henceforth to be properly vigilant on the strategic north-west frontier of their dominions. Buxar not only gave them undisputed mastery over the Bengal subah but also opened the way for extension of their influence west of the Karamnasa.

TREATIES WITH BENGAL NAWABS

Bengal got a new master but neither stable administration nor prosperity. Endless miseries were yet in store for her. At the time of Mir Jafar's reinstallation on the *masnad*, a treaty was concluded between him and the Calcutta council on 10 July 1763.¹⁷⁴ The English Company was allowed to continue to enjoy the grant of the *chaklas* of Burdwan, Midnapur and Chittagong for the expenses of their troops. Its privilege to carry on trade by means of its own *dastaks*, free from all duties, taxes and impositions in all parts of the country, was confirmed, but a duty of 2½ per cent was to be levied on salt on 'the Rowna and Houghli market price'. The exemption from all duties, granted by Mir Qasim to all merchants for two years, was revoked. It was further settled that the nawab would maintain 12,000 cavalry and 12,000 infantry, and the Company's troops would attend him whenever they were wanted. He agreed also to pay to the English Company and private individuals large sums of money as compensation for the losses suffered by them on account of the war and stoppage of trade. Nanda Kumar was appointed his chief minister, but he was not in the good books of the English who suspected him of treachery.¹⁷⁵

Mir Jafar found himself in a highly perplexing situation. In addition to the payments stipulated in the above-mentioned treaty, a promise was extorted from him by the Company for the payment

¹⁷⁴ Vansittart, *Narrative*, III, 358-63.

¹⁷⁵ Letter from Court, 22 February 1764, para 37.

of five lakhs of rupees a month to defray the expenses of the troops so long as the war would continue. The repeated demands of the Company for money, when his treasury was almost exhausted and the prevailing disorder and confusion in the country made it impossible for him to arrange regular collection of revenues, and the iniquitous pressure exerted upon him for payment of a heavy amount as compensation money,¹⁷⁶ aggravated his difficulties. Further, the growing illicit practices on the part of the English Company's servants in respect of their private trade and the oppressions committed on the local merchants and manufacturers by their agents and *gomastas* causing them endless miseries and immense loss to all concerned,¹⁷⁷ accelerated the economic decline of the subah. Mir Jafar's representation and complaints¹⁷⁸ went unheeded and his anxieties increased day by day. The consequent depression in his mind and the infirmities of age hurried him to an unhonoured grave at Murshidabad in February 1785.¹⁷⁹

The Calcutta council then raised Mir Jafar's eldest surviving son, Najm-ud-daulah, to the subahdarship in preference to a minor son of the deceased Miran. The English entered into a treaty with the young nawab on 20 February by which they acquired virtual mastery over most of the essential matters of administration. They took the defence of the province entirely into their own hands; the nawab was henceforth to maintain only such troops as would be necessary for maintenance of internal peace and collection of revenues. They also succeeded in getting the civil government of the country effectually placed under their control. The nawab bound himself to have a naib subah or deputy governor, whose appointment and dismissal would be subject to the Company's approval. They at once used this power to remove Nanda Kumar from the position of chief minister as they had suspected him to be unfriendly to them. Muhammad Raza Khan was appointed naib subah. The nawab was no longer to be free to apply to the emperor for *sanads*, etc., without the permission of the Calcutta council or to maintain any European in his service.¹⁸⁰ Some of the conditions of the old treaty with Mir Jafar were reaffirmed. Besides the revenues of Midnapur, Burdwan and Chittagong, the Company was still to receive from the nawab

¹⁷⁶ *Calendar of Persian Correspondence*, I, No. 2466.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, No. 2410 Mill, III, 356.

¹⁷⁸ *Bengal Secret Consultations*, 2 January, 19 January, 13 February, 30 April,

7 May and 10 September 1764.

¹⁷⁹ Auber, *Rise and Progress of the British Power in India*, I, 98. *Calendar of Persian Correspondence*, I, Nos. 2551, 2552.

¹⁸⁰ Auber, I, 98.

five lakhs of rupees a month during the continuance of war and so much on its termination as the Company might consider necessary to meet its military expenses. The members of the council managed to obtain large presents¹⁸¹ from the new nawab. Their unreasonable and unjust claim to carry on their private trade duty-free was recognized, subject to payment of 2½ per cent on salt only. Thus the Company became henceforth the *de facto* ruler of Bengal, the nawab's authority being reduced to insignificance. The legal sanction for this new position of the English in Bengal was secured by them through Shah Alam's grant of diwani in August 1765 which was a logical sequel to the treaty of 20 February 1765.

Clive came back to Calcutta as governor for the second term in May 1765. His primary task was to deal with the political problems created by the victory at Buxar. Reluctant to impose upon the Company larger burdens than were absolutely necessary he restored the Awadh territories to the fugitive nawab Shuja-ud-daulah; the only exception was Allahabad which, with the surrounding districts, was given to the friendly emperor, Shah Alam. The price exacted from the latter was a *farman* granting the diwani of the Bengal subah to the Company. Through this document Clive secured for his masters full control over the finances of the province and completed the process of exhausting the nawab's functions without assuming direct administrative responsibility and provoking the suspicion and jealousy of other European powers. Thus was inaugurated the system of 'double government' under which the unfortunate province of Bengal groaned for about seven years (1765-72).

¹⁸¹ Broome, 499.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

BENGAL UNDER DIWANI ADMINISTRATION (1765-1772)

BENGAL PRESENTED A SCENE of chaos and corruption when Clive returned from England in May 1765 to assume once again the governorship of Fort William. Referring to the wretched condition of the province he himself observed: "I shall only say that such a scene of anarchy, confusion, bribery, corruption and extortion was never seen or heard of in any country but Bengal; nor such and so many fortunes acquired in so unjust and rapacious a manner. The three provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, producing a clear revenue of £3,000,000 sterling, have been under the absolute management of the Company's servants ever since Mir Jafar's restoration to the Subaship; and they have, both civil and military, exacted and levied contribution from every man of power and consequence, from the Nawab down to the lowest zamindar."¹

'DOUBLE GOVERNMENT'

Apart from making political settlement with the nawab of Awadh and the emperor of Delhi, Clive was called upon to provide for Bengal a firm and stable administration. It was a misfortune that the system which he initiated rendered the situation still more chaotic and led to a period of oppression the like of which is unparalleled in the history of the province. Indeed, the period of the diwani administration witnessed not only the final collapse of the indigenous government, but also the evil consequences of a perverted system known as 'double government' under which the English wielded the real power but evaded the responsibility for administration, and kept up a show of subservience to the titular nawab for no other reasons than sheer expediency and self-interest. The inequities and miseries from which Bengal suffered from 1765 to 1772 were due to the divided and complicated authority which Clive's settlement had set up.

¹ Malcolm, *Life of Clive*; 379.

Clive's plan of government was an ingenious device whereby he sought to conceal the fundamental change that had come in the position of the Company in consequence of the acquisition of the diwani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa from the Mughal emperor, Shah Alam, on 12 August 1765. The treaty of Allahabad which formed the basis of the imperial *farman* constitutes a landmark in the history of Bengal; for it led to that administrative transition which prepared the ground for the final emergence of the modern British system of administration in India. The transition marked the extinction of the nawab's authority, and ushered in a system under which responsibility was carefully separated from power. Though fully conscious of the fact that nothing was left to the nawab except the name and shadow of authority, Clive insisted cynically, "This name, however, this shadow, it is indispensably necessary we should seem to venerate."²

The historic farman of Shah Alam, and the articles of agreement between the nawab of Bengal, Najm-ud-daulah, and the emperor, dated 19 August 1765, provided³ that the Company was to be security for the regular payment by the nawab to the emperor of the sum of 26 lakhs of rupees per annum as the royal tribute and that, as the Company was to assume responsibility for the military defence of the subah, it was to appropriate to its own use the remainder of the revenues after paying for the expenses of the nizamat the annual sum of *sicca* rupees 53,86,131-9-0. So far as the emperor was concerned, the amount allotted to him was nothing but a windfall, for he had so far received nothing from Bengal, indeed he now received payment for granting to the Company what was scarcely his to grant. But still, even though the right of the emperor was purely nominal, his formal recognition of the Company's status was bound to carry weight not only with the Indian powers but with the rival European merchants settled in the country. As for the nawab who was virtually deprived of all his powers and resources, the amount sanctioned for him was barely sufficient for his household expenses and the support of his dignity. Thus, the grant of diwani to the Company conferred on it the right to enjoy⁴ all the surplus revenues of the subah after providing for the emperor's tribute and the nawab's allowance. The Company thus became, to all intents and purposes, 'the sovereigns of a rich and potent Kingdom'.⁵

² Bengal Select Committee, 16 January 1767.

³ Ibid, 7 September 1765.

⁴ Ibid, 5 October 1765.

⁵ Letter from Select Committee to Court, 30 September 1765.

The English resident at the durbar of Murshidabad exercised the functions of the diwani as the collector of the king's revenue under the supervision of the select committee at Calcutta. Along with Muhammad Reza Khan who was the Company's naib diwan for Bengal, he superintended the whole collections, received the monthly payments from the zamindars, disbursed the amounts allotted to the emperor and the nawab, inquired into the cause of deficiencies, redressed injuries sustained or committed by the revenue officers, and transmitted the accounts of his office as also the invoices of treasure and a monthly account of the treasury to the president and select committee at Calcutta.⁶ The resident was subsequently designated 'Collector of the Dewanny'.⁷ The collection of the revenues of Bihar was placed under the control of the chief of the English factory at Patna. Though he acted in conjunction with the naib diwan for Bihar, raja Dhiraj Narayan, and after the latter's dismissal, raja Shitab Rai, he was subject to the supervision of the resident at the durbar to whom he forwarded the collections as well as the monthly accounts of his office. The resident transmitted them to the select committee at Calcutta. It is apparent, therefore, that the resident at the durbar occupied a key position in the diwani machinery, performing duties that were both multifarious and important. In view of this fact, the court of directors insisted⁸ that this officer was to be chosen not merely on the ground of seniority in the service, but on the ground of an established reputation for integrity, efficiency and knowledge of the country language. As the resident also held the office of the chief of the factory at Qasimbazar, it was soon realized that he could not be expected to exercise the functions of the two offices satisfactorily. The authorities at Calcutta, therefore, separated the two offices in 1768 under instructions⁹ from the directors, but they were entrusted to the same person once again in 1772 when the treasury was removed from Murshidabad to Calcutta.

The office of the naib diwan previously carried no fixed salary, for the nawab's ministers enjoyed valuable emoluments and perquisites in accordance with the custom of the country. But Muhammad Reza Khan urged upon the authorities at Calcutta to fix a regular salary with which he could maintain the dignity of his office. This, he argued, would 'prove more honourable to himself and advantageous to the revenue'.¹⁰ The select committee thereupon resolved at a meet-

⁶ Letter from Select Committee to Court, 24 January 1767.

⁷ Bengal Select Committee, 11 February 1767.

⁸ Letter from Court, 24 December 1765.

⁹ Ibid., 20 November 1767.

¹⁰ Bengal Select Committee, 31 December 1766.

ing held on 31 December 1766 that in lieu of all emoluments hitherto enjoyed by the naib diwans, an annual salary of 12 lakhs of rupees would in future be assigned to them, the amount being deducted from the monthly collections and divided among Muhammad Reza Khan, Rai Durlabh, and Shitab Ray, the three naib diwans of the subah. The proportions¹¹ allotted to them were fixed as follows: Nine lakhs to Muhammad Reza Khan, two lakhs to Rai Durlabh and one lakh to Shitab Rai. The salaries allowed to the ministers were exorbitant, but they were at first justified by the authorities on grounds of past usage as well as political considerations. Subsequently, the amount had to be reduced in accordance with the wishes¹² of the directors who wanted that Muhammad Reza Khan should receive no more than five lakhs of rupees per year.

SCOPE OF DIWANI

Though the diwani implied the assumption of a fair portion of administrative jurisdiction, the fact was not realized by the directors who thought that they could appropriate the surplus revenues without discharging the administrative duties of the diwan. In fact, they strongly enjoined upon their servants not to interfere with the work of the government either directly or indirectly. In their letter of 17 May 1766 the directors wrote¹³ as follows: "We observe the account you give¹⁴ of the office and power of the King's Dewan in former times was 'the collecting of all the revenues, and after defraving the expenses of the army and allowing a sufficient fund for the support of the Nizamaut, to remit the remainder to Delhi.' This description of it is not the office we wish to execute; the experience we have already had in the province of Burdwan convinces us how unfit an Englishman is to conduct the collection of the revenues, and follow the subtle native through all his arts to conceal the real value of his country, to perplex and to elude the payments." They added, "We conceive the office of Dewan should be exercised only in superintending the collection and disposal of the revenues, which office, though vested in the Company, should officially be executed by our Resident at the Durbar, under the control of the Governor and Select Committee." They made it clear that 'whatever came under the denomination of civil administration', including the administration of civil justice, would 'remain in the hands of the Nabob or his Ministers'.

¹¹ Letter to Court, 17 March 1769. *Further Report from Committee of Secrecy*, 1773.

¹² Letter from Court, 10 April 1771.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 17 May 1766.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 30 September 1765,

The reasons why Clive was unwilling to accept the responsibilities and obligations implicit in the diwani are easy to understand. It was apprehended that a precipitate or extensive assumption of public authority was bound to give umbrage to other rival European nations, and thereby embarrass England's position in the contemporary European politics. Indeed, an open avowal or assumption of public power was dangerous also from the Indian point of view, for such a step might cause displeasure both in and outside Bengal. The Company had its own political difficulties at home, and it was deemed expedient to guard against all possible chances of parliamentary intervention in its affairs. There were other facts also to be considered. The authorities at Calcutta did not have at their disposal an adequate number of trained and competent English officials who could be called upon to take up administrative responsibilities. It was considered more economical to leave the actual work of administration in the hands of the nawab's officials than to take over the whole responsibility on the shoulders of the Company's own servants, for, as Clive wrote to the directors, "three times the present number of civil servants would be insufficient for that purpose".¹⁵ The financial argument was of crucial importance. It was necessary to save a large sum¹⁶ annually which could defray all the expenses of the Company's investment, furnish the whole of the China Treasure, meet the demands of the other English settlements in India, and still leave a considerable balance in the treasury.

In several letters to the court¹⁷ Clive and his select committee offered elaborate arguments in support of their plan. Revolutions, they thought, would no longer be possible in Bengal, for the means of effecting them would in future be wanting to the nawab. Nor would the Company's servants find it profitable to foment disturbances from which there could be no benefit to themselves, for restitution money or donations could not be obtained from the revenues now under the control of the Company. While avoiding the abuses inevitably resulting from the assumption of public authority the Company would be able to use the surplus revenues to finance its China trade, provide for its investment, relieve the wants of the other presidencies, and pay off its bonds. Moreover, the Company's military establishment would no longer be dependent on the nawab's bounty. As a matter of fact the nawab henceforth would have nothing but the name and shadow

15 Letter from Court, 30 September 1765.

16 The estimated amount was 122 lakhs of mica rupees, or £1,650,900. (Clive's letter to Court, 30 September 1765).

17 Letters to Court, 30 September 1765; 28 November 1765; 31 January 1766; 8 September 1766.

of authority, and he could no longer answer the expectations of the venal and the mercenary out of his insufficient stipend. The worst that might happen in future to the Company would proceed from temporary ravages only, which could never become so general as to prevent the diwani revenue from yielding a sufficient balance to defray the civil and military charges and furnish the necessary investments.

Under the dual system that Clive introduced the nawab remained the ostensible source of power, but actually he was turned into a pensioner of state, a rubber stamp at the disposal of the authorities at Calcutta. Though the Company was the *de facto* sovereign everything was done in the name of the nawab, and the fiction of a nazim's government was carefully maintained. In view of the inexperience and incapacity of the young nawab Najm-ud-daulah, who was recognized as the subahdar of Bengal after the death of his father Mir Jafar in February 1765, Clive and his select committee placed the administration in the hands of deputies. The central executive was organized in a manner which prevented all power from being concentrated in the hands of Muhammad Reza Khan who functioned as naib diwan; associated with him in the work of government, Rai Durlabh and Jagat Seth enjoyed equal shares of influence. This triumvirate managed the affairs of the nizamat jointly, and none of them could act singly in any measure of government; but all of them were subject to the control of Company. The state treasury was placed under three different locks and keys, and each of the ministers had a key, so that no money could be disbursed for any purpose without the joint knowledge and consent of all of them. The resident at the durbar was authorised to inspect the treasury accounts from time to time. If any minister acted contrary to the opinion of the other two, the latter were required to give advice to the governor so that the matter might be placed before the members of the council or committee. Under this division of ministerial authority each minister became a check upon the conduct of the others, and together with the nominal nazim they all owed their continuance to the Company.

Under the regulations¹⁸ of the diwani administration framed by the select committee the nawab's military power was totally undermined, for he was no longer to be allowed to maintain a regular army. The regulations provided that the nawab could keep only such number of horse and foot as the Company should deem necessary for the business of revenue collections and for the support of his own dignity. Clive believed that if the nawab were allowed to have a regular

¹⁸ Bengal Select Committee, 21 June 1765.

military force, he might raise sufficient money with which he could think of regaining his sovereignty. "Even", he argued, "our young Nabob . . . who has little abilities, and less education to supply the want of them; mean, weak and ignorant as this man is, he would, if left to himself, and a few of his artful flatterers, pursue the very paths of his predecessors. It is impossible therefore to trust him with power and be safe. If you mean to maintain your present possessions and advantages, the command of the army and receipt of the revenues must be kept in your hands. Every wish he may express to obtain either, be assured, is an indication of his desire to reduce you to your original state of dependency, to which you can never return, without ceasing to exist."¹⁹ Deprived of military support, the nawab was powerless to exercise the functions of the nizamat; and the Company which alone now possessed the forces for the defence of the subah concerned itself only with the supervision of revenue collections and refused to undertake the wide administrative responsibilities inherent both in the diwani and the nizamat. While nobody was responsible for law and order and for the welfare of the people, the mock pageantry of a nawab's administration continued its pitiful existence, with the Company acting as 'the spring which, concealed under the shadow of the Nabob's name secretly', gave 'motion to this vast machine of government'.²⁰

REVENUE SYSTEM

The land revenue system introduced by Clive was, in its essentials, based on the old Mughal system. The ownership of all the lands in the subah was vested in the state, and the right of the zamindar or the ryot covered only a certain share of the produce. The state claimed so much of the produce in the form of rents or revenues that the land itself had little economic value beyond that of the standing crop. In the best days of the Mughal empire the ryot was usually free from oppression; but after its decline he was squeezed by the zamindars and other middlemen to the point of exhaustion. The diwan collected the revenues with the assistance of all deputies or naibs who had under them a hierarchy of officials with varied functions and powers. These officials fell under two groups: (1) collectors, and (2) supervisors. The first group included the zamindars, taluqdars, jagirdars, chaudhuris, tahsildars and mutahids; the second the qanungos, darogahs, mutsaddis and arnls. The source of the diwani revenue may be classified under four heads: (1) land revenue, (2) duties and cus-

¹⁹ Letter to Court, 30 September 1765.

²⁰ Ibid., 24 January 1767.

toms, (3) farms of trade privileges, and (4) fines and forfeitures. Of these, the revenue derived from lands formed the main item of state receipts. The other sources were more or less minor in point of value and importance.

The land revenue was farmed out either to the zamindars who, holding their title by *sanad* or charter, had in course of time acquired a sort of hereditary right; they were not normally removed so long as they remitted in stipulated revenue, or farmed it out to other temporary farmers such as *tijaradhars*, or to officials directly appointed by the diwan under such designations as *faujdars*, *amils* and *tahsildars*. The government made yearly contracts for the land revenue with the various classes of tax-collectors. Unless he was a defaulter, no tax-collector was ordinarily removed or deprived of his lands. But so long as he paid the state dues he could usually exact the maximum profit out of land revenue because of the absence of effective checks on his mal-practices.

The annual *bandobast* (or rent roll) was fixed or renewed every year on the festival day named the *punyah* (holy day), which ordinarily occurred in the month of May for Bengal, and in the month of September for Bihar. The government usually settled the rent roll for each area with zamindars, if there were any; and where zamindars were not available, other farmers or even officials had to be appointed to take charge of the collections. This general *bandobast* was followed by separate agreements, into which the zamindars, farmers or others entered with old owners or tenants, or with new tenants. In accordance with ancient usage, such agreements once made with tenants for lands held by them and their families were to be treated as permanent if they paid the dues originally agreed upon. But this usage was often violated because of the absence of proper supervision. Unable to secure redress for their grievances, the tenants not unfrequently deserted their lands in despair and became vagabonds or dacoits. Besides, the farming system under which the Company tried to squeeze as much revenue as was possible to collect could hardly be conducive to the welfare and prosperity of the poor tenantry.

"What a destructive system", exclaimed Richard Becher, resident at the durbar, in a letter to Verelst, governor and president at Fort William, on 24 May 1769, "is this for the poor inhabitants! The amils have no connection or natural interest in the welfare of the country where they make the collections, nor have they any certainty of holding their places beyond the year: the best recommendation they can have is to pay up their *Kistbundees*²¹ punctually, to which

purpose they fail not to rack the country whenever they find they can't otherwise pay their Kists and secure a handsome sum for themselves." He continued, "On this destructive plan, and with a continual demand for more revenue have the collections been made ever since the English have been in possession of the Dewanee."²²

Within the framework of the revenue system established by Clive, certain minor reforms were introduced by his immediate successor, governor Vere St. He appears to have believed that the existing system, if duly corrected, could still be made to work satisfactorily. So he sought to preserve it 'as entire and unimpaired as possible'.²³ On the occasion of the very first *punyah* attended by him as governor, he took steps to provide for the removal of a number of glaring abuses in the collection of the revenues. Reductions were allowed and the over-rates were struck off in some cases in which the dues were too high and as a consequence there were large arrears accumulated for several years. The heavy charges of collection were substantially reduced by the dismissal of the numerous rabble of troops maintained by the *faujdars* and other officials. In order to stimulate agricultural production the zamindars were strictly enjoined upon to promote cultivation of their lands and afford every protection to the industrious ryots; they were at the same time warned that any misconduct on their part would meet with condign punishment. As it appeared that large tracts of land had been alienated under the designation of jagirs by force or fraud, it was decided to resume all such lands for the benefit of the exchequer. Orders were issued, directing all persons holding jagirs to register their *sanads* in the head *cutcherry* within six months to prove their rights and title. It was further notified that the jagirs would be continued only to ancient and respectable families, and to those who had just claims.

Certain changes were made in the methods of maintaining land records and accounts relating to collections. To stop the confusion caused by frequent change of the names of districts in the revenue accounts, and to prevent the frauds that might be concealed under such practices, it was considered necessary to provide that one particular name should always be used to specify the same district. The practice of incorporating balances of former years with the rents of the current year was found to be productive of much inconvenience. The frequent dismissal of the collectors, either on account of inefficiency or misconduct, rendered the outstanding balances heavier

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22 Bengal Select Committee, 8 July 1769.

23 Bengal Public Consultations, 16 December 1769.

every year, and no new collector could be easily available to accept office under such conditions. It was decided, therefore, to keep the accounts of the balances apart, and enter into a separate agreement with the collector, whereby he made himself responsible for such balances as upon enquiry should appear equitable, or might be pointed out to him by the government or by his predecessor in office. By this means the obvious inconvenience of combining the accounts of different years was avoided.

One of the principal defects of the revenue system of this period was the over-assessment of many areas due to the lack of an exact knowledge of their real value. It was impossible to fix the just value of the lands unless complete measurement was made and the gross produce fully ascertained. Clive and his successors took a keen interest in the work of survey, and encouraged Captain James Rennell, surveyor general,²⁴ to complete his survey of Bengal, and form one general chart from those already made by him. At his request more assistants were allowed to him by Verelst, and a larger menial staff was sanctioned. The increase of expenditure on survey work was justified on the ground that "the benefit of such an undertaking will be an ample compensation for the charges that are attendant upon it".²⁵ The work of survey in those days was neither safe, nor easy; during one of his surveying tours Rennell was severely assaulted by a party of sannyasis, as a result of which he received several serious cuts from their broadswords.²⁶ *Parwanahs* were, therefore, issued to the *gomastas* of all taujdars, amils and zamindars, directing them to afford the surveyors every possible assistance, and the zamindars were cautioned that if they obstructed the surveyors in their work, they would be severely punished, and even dispossessed of their lands.²⁷ Despite the issue of the official *parwanahs* the surveyors were often badly treated by the hostile zamindars and high-handed faujdars who complained that the collection of the revenues was greatly interrupted by survey operations.

Arbitrary assessment under the designation *mathaut* constituted an additional burden on the ryots during this period. *Mathaut* was a general name for all extra demands made for defraying certain special expenses,²⁸ e.g. presentation of robes of honour, etc., on the occasion of the *punyah* (*khalat baha*), the repairing of bridges and

²⁴ Rennell was appointed to this post by Clive by an order dated 1 January 1767.

²⁵ Letter to Court, 28 March 1768.

²⁶ Rennell's *Journal*, ed. La Touche, published by Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1910. The *Journal* ends on 23 March 1767.

²⁷ *Calendar of Persian Correspondence*, I, Nos. 53, 68, 85, etc.

²⁸ Bengal Select Committee, 28 April 1770.

river banks (*pooshtebundy*), the payment of a customary fee to the nazir and the mutsaddis of the *cutcherry* (*rusum nazarat*), or the maintainance of the state elephants (*fil khanah*). The *mathaut* was exacted from the ryots in addition to the fixed revenue, probably because the authorities feared that the directors might not allow the aforesaid expenses. That this was an entirely vexatious taxation was, however, fully realised. After his appointment as resident at the durbar, Becher strongly pleaded for the abolition of such exactions on the ground that this was one of the principal causes of the distressed state of the country. "I wish", he wrote, "the word (i.e. *mathaut*) could be abolished and never heard of more."²⁹ Verelst was willing to abolish these arbitrary demands, and, at his instance, the select committee even agreed to forbid the levy of the *mathaut* in future. This decision, however, could not be immediately enforced, and the reform was postponed until the time of Warren Hastings.

While the land revenue was collected with the utmost strictness, the revenue demand itself was considerably enhanced after the assumption of the diwani. Even Clive saw the danger inherent in this policy. Writing on 25 April 1766 he observed, "To attempt further increase of the revenues will be drawing the knot too tight." In September he wrote that he could not think of increasing the Company's revenues 'by the least oppressive mode'. At the time of his departure he advised his successor 'not to be very desirous of increasing the revenues, especially where it can only be effected by oppressing the land holders and tenants'.³⁰ Verelst also was opposed to the policy of enhancing the revenue demand, and recommended and enforced substantial reductions in 1769. "Permit me", he wrote to the directors in 1768, "to give you my most serious opinion, founded on almost nineteen years' experience in the various branches of your revenue and in various districts of your possessions, that it is totally beyond the power of your administration to make any material addition to your rents, or remit a single rupee in specie home." But the insistent demand of the directors for a steady increase in the investments without any corresponding export of specie from England, coupled with the heavy drain of silver from Bengal, forced the authorities to raise the collections even against their better judgment. In vain did the latter protest that the enforced increase of the collection was bound to prove 'destructive to the country'.³¹

29 Letter from Becher, 24 May 1769.

30 Bengal Select Committee, 16 January 1767.

31 Ibid, 8 July 1769; 12 October 1769. Verelst, *View*, 76.

The ceded districts (Burdwān, Midnapur and Chittagong) and Calcutta, being directly under the management of the Company's servants, were free from the oppression of the amils employed in the diwani lands; while as a result of the system initiated during the time of Clive and continued by his successors, these were more prosperous and better cultivated.³² In fact, the work of the Company's servants in this sphere is in some respects of greater importance than the measures adopted by them for the diwani lands. Such was the success of the reforms in the ceded lands that Verelst, who had been mainly responsible for these as supervisor during the time of Clive, claimed on the expiry of his own governorship that the condition of these lands formed so striking a contrast to that of the other parts of Bengal, where oppression and rack-renting prevailed, that foreigners as well as Indians eagerly wished for a more extensive application of these reforms.

These reforms³³ covered many points. The oppressive auction system was stopped and fairly long leases were encouraged. A moderate rent was fixed. The increase of *bazi zamin* or charity lands was checked by a proper scrutiny of the *sanads*. Lands held by the servants in office and their dependants were assessed at a fair rate. The Europeans were forbidden to hold farms on their own account, or in the name of their dependants. Nobody holding any post was allowed to hold a farm, except for a small piece of land necessary for the maintenance of his family. To prevent fraud and embezzlement *pattahs* were granted to the tenants, showing the amount of rent which each tenant was to pay. The cultivation of the mulberry tree was encouraged by the assessment of the mulberry plantations at a reduced rate of rent, and waste lands were granted on favourable terms. To ascertain the true value of the lands, surveyors were appointed to measure them and note the area of land each tenant held. The collection of additional cesses and *ahwabs* was strictly scrutinized to prevent the impositions of the mutsaddis and the oppression of the farmers.

While the ceded and Calcutta lands were in a satisfactory state, the condition of the diwani lands was admittedly deplorable mainly on account of the abuses of the revenue system. The diwani revenues were in themselves a perplexing subject, and the Indian collectors who alone could have supplied any authentic information found it profitable to conceal their knowledge. Besides, most of the old records had either been burnt, or carried away by Mir Qasim during his flight from Bengal. Thus, without an accurate survey of the

³² Bengal Select Committee, 11 August 1769.

³³ See Verelst, *View*.

country, which was bound to take time, a just valuation of the lands was impossible. Conjectural—hence frequently excessive—estimates had, therefore, to be adopted with disastrous consequences, and the balances too were often so heavy that they could not be recovered without oppression.

Despite stringent measures taken against the oppressive amils and faujdars their rapacity could not be effectively checked.³⁴ The oppressed tenants were usually too poor to quit their homes and seek justice at the capital. Illegal exactions continued to be made with impunity, and the long train of *gomastas*, *dalals*, *paikars*, *pykes*, *barkandazes* and other subordinates employed in the work of collection combined to perpetuate a thousand modes of oppression and illegal taxation. In the words of Verelst, they 'fattened on the spoils of the industrious ryot'.³⁵ The resumption of the charity lands reacted adversely on the economic condition of the people, as a large number of people were suddenly reduced to beggary.³⁶ Such was the misery of the former holders of the charity lands that they were obliged to pay the revenue by selling their household goods or even by pawning their children.³⁷

The administration of the revenue was further complicated during this period by the anomalous and unscientific character of the silver currency. As no two mints struck coins of a uniform fineness or weight, no actual coin could be treated as the standard-coin. In consequence a nominal coin, called the current rupee, was introduced, by which the numerous types of rupees were valued by the *sarrabs*. Besides, a varying rate of *batta* was charged on the *siccias* which were triennially recoined, and as the ryots had to pay the revenue in the newly coined *siccias* of which a sufficient quantity obviously could never be available, they had to pay an additional *batta* for paying the revenue in rupees of previous years. Thus the *batta* considerably added to the burden of the tenants. The latter had to receive payment for their produce in coins whose value they could not understand, and when they paid those very coins for rent, their value was deducted according to a calculation which they were too ignorant to grasp. The issue of gold coins during the time of Clive and Verelst only made matters worse. Although the tenants were encouraged to pay the revenue in gold *mohurs*, the experiment did not succeed owing to the over-valuation of the *mohurs*.

³⁴ Bengal Select Committee, 12 October 1769.

³⁵ *View*, 75.

³⁶ *Siyar* (Lucknow text), 828.

³⁷ *Muzaffar Nama* (Allahabad University Ms.), 438.

SUPERVISORS

It was because Verelst was fully convinced of the inequity of the existing system that he proposed the institution of English supervisors in all districts. This proposal constituted the first step towards direct assumption of administrative responsibility by the Company's servants, and was the beginning of a new system ultimately introduced in the time of Warren Hastings. The success of English supervision in the ceded lands had already been so conspicuous that it naturally created the impression that a gradual extension of that system to the diwani lands was both necessary and practicable. The resident at the durbar could alone neither prevent oppression nor obtain authentic information of the grievances of the people. It was expected, therefore, that if English supervisors were appointed the tyranny of the local officials would be restrained by them. Besides, the authorities were sensible of the fact that the abuses of the existing system could not be eradicated without a thorough local inquiry. Such inquiry could conveniently be conducted by independent supervisors; their probe alone could enable the authorities to formulate their future plan of reform. It was further hoped that the appointment of supervisors would not only lead to the elimination of trade monopolies, but would also promote the growth of general trade and the prosperity and happiness of the common people. The system of supervisors was also intended to be a 'nursery' for trained officials capable of succeeding, when called upon to do so, to the highest offices in the government.

The circumstances that finally led to the adoption of the scheme may now be briefly analyzed. It was Sykes, the first resident at the durbar, who originally stressed the utility of appointing English gentlemen as check on the collections in the diwani lands.³⁸ His successor, Richard Becher, was more emphatic in his denunciation of the malpractices of the Indian collectors and pressed for the application of the plan 'now practised at Burdwan' to the whole of the province.³⁹ In 1769 the select committee considered the joint letter of the governor and Becher, together with their separate opinions on the miserable state of affairs obtaining in the country, and decided to appoint 'a gentleman in the service' to function in subordination to the resident at the durbar 'in every province or district'.⁴⁰ This decision, it may be noted, was taken by the committee on the basis of 'an equivocal permission' given by the directors in one of their

³⁸ Bengal Select Committee, 4 January 1769.

³⁹ Ibid, 8 July 1769.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 16 August 1769.

recent letters.⁴¹ The letter in question carried the directors' approval of the plan adopted for the revenue administration of the ceded lands, and, as such, was not unjustifiably interpreted as an implied sanction for the extension of the said plan to the diwani lands. The select committee's action was later fully approved by the directors.

A long and elaborate letter⁴² of instructions to supervisors, drawn up by Verelst and referred to in the select committee's resolution, laid down the duties of the supervisors under five main heads: (1) to prepare a summary history of the districts placed under their charge; (2) to report on the state, produce, and capacity of the lands in their districts; (3) to ascertain the amount and the manner of the collection of revenue, cesses, and other demands made on the ryot by the government, the zamindar, or the collectors; (4) to examine and regulate the conditions of commerce, and abolish all extraordinary demands of the *gomastas* and other agents; and (5) to enforce justice, check corruption, and abolish all arbitrary fines. The letter concludes with a moving appeal which indicates a tender regard for the poor ryot of Bengal. The supervisors were asked to 'explore and eradicate numberless oppressions' which were 'as grievous to the poor as they were injurious to the government', to display the Englishmen's 'national principles of honour, faith, rectitude, and humanity', and to 'raise the heart of the ryot from oppression and despondency to security and joy'. Their behaviour was expected to be 'prudent and wise'. They were advised to maintain direct contact with the people. "Versed as you are in the language, depend on none, where you yourself can possibly hear and determine. Let access to you be easy, and be careful of the conduct of your dependents. Aim at no undue influence yourself, and check it in all others." The qualities of 'integrity, disinterestedness, assiduity and watchfulness' were to be cultivated, not only for their 'own guidance, but as an example for all others'. Their performance would be carefully watched and suitably rewarded or punished: "As the extent and importance of your trust are great, so in proportion will be the approbation or censure, arising from your good or ill conduct in it, attended with unusual distinction or particular severity."

Early in September the council considered the proceedings of the select committee held on 16 August and unanimously resolved to adopt the plan of supervisorships. Becher was directed to instruct and look after the work of the new supervisors. Eight supervisors for the districts of Bengal were immediately appointed. Those for

⁴¹ Letter from Court, 11 November 1768.

⁴² Bengal Select Committee, 16 August 1769.

the districts in Bihar were, however, appointed during the governorship of Cartier in 1770.⁴³ Both Becher⁴⁴ and Muhammad Reza Khan,⁴⁵ however, counselled delay in the execution of the plan on the ground that immediate appointment of supervisors would prove detrimental to the current year's collections. Becher pointed out that the arrival of the supervisors 'in the height of collections' would create a divided power, and provide the artful people with a good opportunity of evading payment of the revenues by preferring numberless complaints, the justness or impropriety of which the inexperienced supervisors would be unable to judge. He urged at the same time that the supervisors needed a special training at Murshidabad where the old records might help them in their subsequent inquiries.

The question as to whether the plan should be immediately enforced or deferred for the time being, came up for final decision before the council towards the close of October.⁴⁶ The majority, being impressed with Becher's opinion that the collections might suffer as a result of immediate enforcement of the plan, favoured the view that the appointment of supervisors should be deferred till the close of February 1770 except for those districts where the resident at the durbar thought they might be sent immediately without detriment of the collections. Meanwhile Becher grouped the Bengal districts into convenient divisions by annexing to each principal district all contiguous smaller areas. This arrangement was followed also in regard to those lands which were connected through tenure with a neighbouring district. For example, Bishnupur was attached to Birbhum, while the lands north of Murshidabad and west of the Ganges were combined to form the division of Bhagalpur and Rajmahal. After these additions had been made, there remained the following districts which did not come under the jurisdiction of any of the supervisors: Chunkakhali, Rokunpur, Jehangirpur, Fatehsingh Lashkarpur and Jessor. Chunakhali, Fatehsingh Lashkarpur and parts of Rajshahi west of the Ganges were placed under the direct charge of the resident at the durbar, while separate supervisorships were to be created for Jessor and Rokunpur. The resident was empowered to issue such supplementary instructions to the supervisors as might be found necessary afterwards.⁴⁷ It was also decided to

⁴³ Bengal Select Committee, 9 June 1770. Bengal Secret Consultations, 2 August 1770.

⁴⁴ Bengal Select Committee, 25 September 1769.

⁴⁵ Muzafar Name, 452.

⁴⁶ Bengal Secret Consultations, 26 October 1769.

⁴⁷ Bengal Select Committee, 10 December 1769.

place the supervisors under the control of the resident at the durbar, who in case of any misconduct on their part was to have the power of recalling them from their stations, and of reporting their proceedings to the governor and select committee. The only exception was the supervisor of Dacca who, being a member of the council, and as such equal in status to the resident, was not to be subordinate to the latter, though he too was to send all his reports and accounts to him.

A few days before Verelst finally laid down his office, the select committee framed certain general directions for the conduct of the supervisors.⁴⁸ Of these, two deserve special mention. Although they were not to interfere in the collections, they were to exercise a controlling authority over the collectors who were required to report all transactions to the supervisors. As regards the supervisors' sources of income, they were not forbidden to carry on private trade of their own, but they were directed to discharge their duties 'with as few embarrassments as possible'.

The entire plan of supervisorships actually came into force in the time of governor Cartier, when five supervisors were appointed for the province of Bihar. Adopted with the best of intentions by its authors, and approved and eulogised by the directors,⁴⁹ the plan was doomed from the very start. Its failure became so apparent that the directors who had cordially welcomed it in 1771 insisted on its immediate withdrawal in 1773.⁵⁰ It will not be out of place here to analyse the causes responsible for its failure.

The duties entrusted to the supervisors were so numerous and difficult that they called for almost super-human industry. Indeed, it was not humanly possible for them to execute even a small part of their trust. They were to be not so much revenue superintendents as historians, economic investigators, rural statisticians, experts in land tenures, trade development officers, controllers of law and justice, and protectors of the poor. Having been ordered to perform far more than they could possibly execute, they finished by performing much less than they might have done. The number of the supervisors actually appointed was also much too small. The resident at the durbar, who was already overburdened with his own normal work, and was expected to control the work of the supervisors, was to act also as the supervisor of a big division. The chief of Dacca, whose duties in the local factory were no less arduous, was also to

48 Bengal Select Committee, 15 December 1769.

49 Letter from Court, 10 April 1771.

50 Ibid, 7 April 1773.

act as the supervisor of Dacca and Sylhet. From such an inadequate and overburdened staff it was futile to expect any remarkable achievements.

From the outset the supervisors were hampered in their investigations by the zamindars and collectors. To them the appointment of English supervisors was naturally distasteful; they tried their best to obstruct or embarrass the enquiries and misrepresented the conduct of the new superintendents. The supervisors, with the exception of few, had little or no training for the specialized work with which they were entrusted. Originally appointed for the purpose of collecting information and of keeping a vigilant watch over the administration and the collection of the revenues, they became eventually, in the words of Warren Hastings,⁵¹ 'the sovereigns' of the divisions over which they presided. They began to act as chief magistrates, collected rents, and farmed the lands to persons whom they liked to favour. Thus the original design failed as a result of the subsequent transformation of the character of the supervisorship itself.

Not being debarred from engaging in private trade, the supervisors were not unnaturally tempted to engross the inland trade of their districts, exploiting their privileged position for this purpose. They could thus have little leisure for their own normal duties. The Indian *banians*, who were 'devils' according to Warren Hastings, abused their power and tyrannized over the poor with the utmost impunity. Furthermore, the supervisors were not granted adequate salaries; to make 'matters worse, their allowances were drastically reduced in 1771 as a measure of economy desired by the directors.⁵² Such unwise economy naturally caused discontent among the supervisors and made them all the more susceptible to the temptations to which their Indian *banians* always exposed them. As the supervisor tended to be preoccupied with his private trade, his *banian* soon became 'the lord of every supervisorship';⁵³ all business passed through his hands, and no complaints could reach his master without his consent.

The absence of strict control over the supervisors owing to the weakness and preoccupations of the authorities at Patna, Murshidabad and Calcutta was further responsible for the failure of the plan. But control would hardly have been effective even if the superior authorities had been more alert. The supervisors were often sup-

⁵¹ Letter from Warren Hastings to J. Dupre, 26 March 1772.

⁵² Letter from Warren Hastings to Colebrooke, 26 March 1772, and to Dupre, 6 January 1773.

⁵³ Bengal Secret Consultations, 18 March 1771,

ported by strong connections either in the council or in the court of directors, and were, in the words of Warren Hastings, secure from a strict scrutiny into their conduct and totally exempt from the fear of punishment. Finally, the famine of 1770 also helped in upsetting the whole plan.

DIRECTORS' PLAN OF REFORM

With a view to eradicating the glaring abuses in the revenue administration, the directors themselves chalked out a plan of reform which they laid down in their letter of 30 June 1769. They professed a desire to "proceed in this work without taking off from any of those profits and emoluments which have usually accrued to the zamindars who have inherited lands from their ancestors, much less to add anything to the rents to be collected from the tenants". They decided to appoint two committees—one at Murshidabad and the other at Patna—for the management of the diwani revenues under the control of the president and council. These committees were to control the entire work of revenue collection, and for this purpose they were to be assisted by Muhammad Reza Khan and Shitab Rai, through whom all the business was to be transacted. The directors summed up 'the whole of this subject' as follows: "Our meaning is to save what we can of the large salaries now paid to idle dependants appointed to nominal but useless offices by the country government, and to lead you to such a knowledge of the real state of the rents and cultivation of the several districts as may enable you to keep the tenants free from imposition and extortion, and to give every possible encouragement to the husbandman and the manufacturer."

The directors informed the council at the same time that they had resolved to send three commissioners to India 'with full powers of superintending the Company's several Presidencies and directing their operations to one uniform Plan'. These commissioners were Henry Vansittart, Luke Sрафton and Francis Forde. Although appointed for the purpose of co-ordination the work of reform in all the settlements of the Company, they were especially empowered to enforce 'a better mode' of collecting the diwani revenues in accordance with the plan laid down by the directors. The commissioners had embarked from England on 30 September 1769 and were known even to have reached the Cape of Good Hope; but they failed to reach India, and it was presumed after a prolonged suspense that they were lost at sea.

On the presumption that the work of the ill-fated commissioners

in respect of the diwani revenues now devolved on the Calcutta Council, it decided to enforce the orders of the directors regarding the appointment of councils of revenue at Murshidabad and Patna.⁵⁴ The council at Murshidabad was to consist of four members, the council at Patna of three members. They were ordered to take charge of their offices in September 1770. These councils functioned until they were dissolved in 1772 on the recommendation of the committee of circuit.

Over and above these two controlling councils, a separate controlling committee of revenue was constituted at Calcutta⁵⁵ in conformity with the general instructions laid down by the directors⁵⁶ for the organization of the council at Fort William into proper committees for efficient transaction of business. Under this committee was placed all business relating to the revenues, and the councils at Murshidabad and Patna were placed under its direct control. Although the directors had intended that each controlling committee was to consist of four members only the Calcutta council on the recommendation of governor Cartier⁵⁷ decided that the controlling committee of revenue should be composed of the whole council. The committee ceased to function in 1772, when it was replaced by a new board of revenue at the instance of the committee of circuit.

Notwithstanding all that Verelst and Cartier did to alleviate the abuses of the revenue system which Clive had introduced, its breakdown was an undisputed fact. So long as the dual system was to remain in force, the authorities were powerless to redress grievances or effect any radical improvement. Persons of character had been employed in the work of collection, but, as the select committee confessed with regret,⁵⁸ "Fear, reward, severity and indulgence have all failed, and ended in a short political forbearance or additional acts of dishonesty and rapine." The resident at the durbar whose duty it was to check abuses and prevent oppression could not restrain single-handed 'the depredations of hungry collectors' who practised 'their native oppressions over a timid, servile and defenceless people'. The controlling councils, exclusive of the extremely perfunctory control which they exercised over the supervisors, had neither the time nor the inclination to redress grievances. The supreme council or the controlling committee of revenue at Calcutta was, in the words

⁵⁴ Bengal Secret Consultations, 27 June 1770; 6 July 1770.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 7 March 1771.

⁵⁶ Letter from Court, 23 March 1770.

⁵⁷ Bengal Secret Consultations, 21 March 1771.

⁵⁸ Bengal Select Committee, 16 August 1769,

of Warren Hastings, 'devoid of all power and authority beyond the narrow limits of Calcutta'.

FAMINE OF 1770

Nothing could better illustrate the utter inhumanity of the whole system than the dreadful famine of 1770, which was caused by the failure of crops in 1768 and 1769. It raged in all virulence throughout the year 1770 and was followed by pestilence. It swept away about ten millions of human beings comprising at least one-third of the total population of Bengal and Bihar, and a fair portion of the rest was reduced to beggary exceeding all description.⁵⁹ In June 1770 the resident at the durbar stated that the living were feeding on the dead. Little or no relief was afforded to the famine-stricken. No relief works were opened. A provincial council sanctioned a grant of five rupees worth of rice daily among a starving population of 400,000 souls. Not more than £9,000 was spent by the Company on famine relief.⁶⁰

The general distress was turned by many of the Company's officials and their gomastas into a source of illicit private profit, for they monopolized all available grain and compelled the poor ryots to sell even the seed requisite for the next harvest, thereby aggravating universal misery. At the moment when people lived on leaves of trees and offered their sons and daughters for sale for want of food, the worst of profiteering was allowed to flourish without enquiry or punishment.⁶¹ As if this was not enough, the normal revenue demand was fully enforced, notwithstanding the huge mortality and the consequent decrease of cultivation. In fact, not only was there no loss to the total revenue, but there was on the contrary a perceptible increase in the collections of the years 1770-71 and 1771-72. The collections were violently kept up by means of arbitrary impositions and cesses like the *najai* which was a highly iniquitous levy on the actual or surviving inhabitants of a village to supply the loss to the revenue due to desertion or death of their neighbours.⁶² Many cultivators fled; in 1771 one-third of the land was returned as deserted. A number of zamindars were ruined in consequence, and many others were imprisoned for arrears of rents, and people of the highest rank could ill conceal the marks of poverty and want. Large parts of the country reverted to jungle and in more than one district the estimates

⁵⁹ Letter to Court, 9 May 1770.

⁶⁰ J. C. Sinha, *Economic Annals of Bengal*, 101.

⁶¹ Letter from Court, 28 August 1771.

⁶² Hunter, *Bengal Ms Records*, I, 54.

of total casualties reached so high as one-half and even more. In the midst of such dislocation of social and economic life of the province the authorities at Calcutta boasted of their efficient management of the revenues in the following words, "We flatter ourselves that the comparative view we hope you will take of the Bengal collections for these several years past with those of last year will satisfy you as to the favourable success we have met with in the collection of the revenues."⁶³ All this betrays a cynical complacency which is truly amazing, if not atrocious, and which could be possible only under the conditions created by the dual system of government.

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

The administration of law and justice which has a vital connection with the administration of revenue was equally unsatisfactory throughout this period because of the anomalous character of the government under which the Company's servants were prevented from assuming a direct responsibility for it. Left to the nominal care of the nawab and his ministers who possessed no real powers, the machinery of law and justice in the diwani sector lost its former efficacy, and virtually ceased to operate beyond the narrow circle round the capital. Calcutta and the ceded lands, being directly under the control of the Company's servants, had regular courts of justice, but even there the judicial organization was not free from anomalies and imperfections.

In accordance with the traditions of Mughal administration, the judicial powers in the subah were shared between the nazim and the diwan. In theory the nazim was the supreme magistrate in the province, and was responsible for the maintenance of the peace and administration of criminal justice; the diwan, by virtue of his office as the head of the provincial exchequer, held charge of civil jurisdiction, and was the highest judge in all civil and revenue matters. This line of demarcation between the jurisdiction of the nizamat and the diwani was, however, practically obliterated after the assumption of the diwani by the English. Despite its accession to the office of diwan the Company strictly enjoined upon its servants not to interfere in the administration of justice; while the nawab had neither the power nor the means to enforce the criminal jurisdiction of the nizamat. The regular course of justice was, in the words of Warren Hastings, everywhere suspended. Muhammad Reza Khan held the offices of naib diwan and naib nazim, but he was concerned more with the collection of the revenue than with the exercise of civil and crimi-

⁶³ Letter to Court, 3 November 1772.

nal jurisdiction. In the countryside lawlessness was on the increase owing to the impotence of the nizamat, and the number of dacoities rose to an alarming extent.⁶⁴ The *sannyasi* raiders, above all, created havoc in the outlying parts of Bengal, and the *parganah* battalions found it increasingly difficult to cope with this danger.⁶⁵

At Murshidabad the following officers had their courts:⁶⁶ (1) The nazim who, as supreme magistrate, presided personally at the trial of capital offenders and held a court every Sunday; (2) the diwan who was supposed to decide cases relating to real estates and landed property, but seldom exercised this authority in person; (3) the *Daroghah-Adalat-al Alia*, or the naib nazim, who was the judge of all matters of property, excepting claims of land and inheritance, and took cognizance of quarrels etc.; (4) the *Daroghah-Adalat-Diwani*, or the naib diwan, who decided cases relating to landed property; (5) the taujdar who was the chief police officer and judge of all crimes which were not capital; (6) the *qazi* who besides being the judge of all claims of inheritance or succession, performed the ceremonies of wedding, circumcision and funeral; (7) the *muhtasib* who took cognizance of drunkenness, the vending of spirituous liquors and intoxicating drugs, and false weights and measures; (8) the *mufti* who expounded the law and wrote the *fatwa* applicable to the case, in accordance with which the *qazi* pronounced his judgment; (9) the qanungo who, as registrar of the lands, acted as a referee in cases relating to lands; (10) the *kotwal* who was peace officer of the night, subordinate to the faujdar.

From the above list it would be apparent that there were properly three courts for the decision of civil causes, and one for police and criminal justice. Of these, the courts of the naib diwan and the faujdar alone were of some practical utility. The courts did not always adhere to their prescribed limits of jurisdiction. Not only did the civil courts encroach upon each other's authority, but both civil and criminal courts sometimes took cognizance of the same cases. In the districts the faujdars acted as magistrates and chiefs of police, and had jurisdiction in criminal matters. They had under them *thanahdars* and *kotwals* who helped in maintaining the peace in villages and towns respectively. It is to the faujdars, therefore, that the people in the districts looked up for justice, although acts of oppression on their part were not uncommon. The *qazi* had his substitutes

⁶⁴ *Muzaffar Name*, 441. Committee of Circuit, 28 June 1773. *Bengal Revenue Consultations*, 17 November 1772.

⁶⁵ *Bengal Select Committee*, 30 April 1767.

⁶⁶ Letter from Committee of Circuit, 15 August 1772. *Siyar* (Lucknow text), 828-34.

or *naibs* in the countryside, but their legal powers were too limited to be a general use, and the authority which they assumed, being often warranted by no lawful commission, was usually a source of oppression. By virtue of their position in the hierarchy of diwani, the amils, *shiqdars*, naibs and tahsildars had some jurisdiction in revenue cases, while the mutsaddis who were clerks in the revenue department and the qanungos who kept registers of the value, tenure and transfer of lands acted as referees in cases of dispute or uncertainty regarding rights in land. In the interior of the country, particularly in rural areas, the zamindar in his private *cutcherry* administered rough-and-ready justice; and although he did not preside over the local faujdari court, as has been wrongly stated,⁶⁷ his criminal jurisdiction may have extended at least to the petty offences committed in his area.

That the organization and administration of law and justice was in a state of deplorable confusion will be apparent from the following facts. The officers of justice received their appointments not on grounds of merit and suitability, but usually as a matter of official favour or indulgence. In consequence, corruption was rampant and 'the painful task of rendering justice' was turned, in the words of a contemporary chronicler, 'into a powerful engine for making a fortune'.⁶⁸ The judges were not paid fixed salaries. They derived their emoluments from fines and recognized perquisites, but there was no one to check the rates of the perquisites they drew from their office. The office of the *qazi* could also be leased out and under-leased. The result was that people, ignorant even of the main principles of religion and law, took lease of what they called the *qazi's* rights, and openly under-leased them to others. Moreover, the decisions of the judges were in most cases 'corrupt bargains with the highest bidder'.⁶⁹ On receiving a suitable fee, the *qazi* could always 'turn right into wrong and injustice into justice'.⁷⁰ The levy of one-quarter, called the *chauth*, on the amount of all debts, and on the value of all property recovered by the decrees of the court, was a highly iniquitous and oppressive mode of taxation sanctioned by the government.

Another serious defect in the judicial system was the want of properly graded subordinate courts for the distribution of justice in such parts of the province as lay out of the reach of the courts at Murshidabad. In consequence, only the well-to-do or the vagabonds could

67 Sixth Report of Committee of Secrecy, 1773, 2.

68 *Siyar* (Lucknow text), 829.

69 Bengal Select Committee, 16 August 1769.

70 *Siyar* (Lucknow text), 828.

afford to travel so far for justice. Owing to the absence of effective control from the headquarters it was easy for people in the interior to assume judicial powers without any lawful title or commission. It was to prevent this growing evil that the supervisors were required to check and register the *sanads* of all officers of justice. They were also instructed to put an end to all arbitrary fines such as the *faujdari bazi jama* which constituted an additional source of bribery and oppression. Registers and records of proceedings were not kept by the courts, and this too encouraged the propensity of the judges to corruption and fraud. Besides, certain practices sanctioned by Muslim law were also extremely anomalous, such as the infliction of fine, instead of capital punishment, for murder with an instrument not formed for shedding blood, or the privilege granted to sons or the nearest relations to pardon a murderer.

In the ceded lands the administration of justice was more regular, because the chief of Chittagong, or the residents at Midnapur and Burdwan, in addition to their normal duties, were also concerned with the courts of justice in their districts. They were invested with the superintendence of the *faujdari* jurisdiction and were authorized to arrest robbers, dacoits and other disturbers of the peace. Appeals against their decisions could be made to the governor and council. In cases of capital punishment they usually sought the advice of the latter.

The following were the main courts of law in the ceded districts⁷¹, (1) the *sadar cutcherry* which dealt with cases pertaining to land-rents and landed property; (2) the *bakshi dastur* which dealt with matters concerning the police; (3) the *faujdari adalat* which dealt with the criminal matters including capital offences; (4) the *barah adalat* which was a court of *meum* and *tuum* for all demands above Rs 50; (7) the *bazi zamin dastur* which dealt with cases relating to charity and rent-free lands; (8) the *bazi jama dastur* which took cognizance of social offences and had jurisdiction in matters concerning grants for lands and public works for the accommodation of travellers, such as *sarais* or resting places, etc.; (9) the *kharaj dastur* which dealt with the settlement of the landholders' accounts.

At Calcutta there were two sets of courts: One instituted by the royal charters and deriving jurisdiction from the English Crown over British subjects, their 'native' employees and other persons who willingly subjected themselves to that jurisdiction, and the other established by the Company in its capacity as zamindar, and deriving its

⁷¹ Vereist, *View*, Appendix, 219-20.

authority from the country government, and having jurisdiction over the local inhabitants only.

The following courts of justice had been instituted by royal charters;⁷² (1) the mayor's court, a court of record, consisting of the mayor and nine aldermen, dealing with all civil suits, except such as concerned the 'natives'; (2) the court of appeals, also a court of record, consisting of the governor and council, which heard appeals against the decrees of the mayor's court; (3) the court of requests, consisting of 24 commissioners who determined summarily such petty suits as did not exceed five pagodas or forty shillings in amount; (4) the court of quarter session, or the governor and members of the council acting as justices of the peace and also as commissioners of oyer and terminer and gaol delivery to try criminal cases.

Besides the aforesaid courts there were the following courts established under the authority of the country government:⁷³ (1) the court or *cutcherry*, consisting of the Company's servants under the council, hearing all matters of *meum* and *tuum* in which only the 'native' inhabitants of Calcutta were concerned; (2) the zamindari or faujdari court, presided over by a member of the council or sometimes a servant under the council alone, determining in a summary fashion all cases of a criminal nature among the 'native' inhabitants who did not apply to the English court of justice; (3) the collector's *cutcherry*, taking cognizance of all cases relating to payment of revenues; (4) the caste *cutcherry* presided over by some distinguished Hindu official nominated by the governor, taking cognizance of all matters relating to the caste observances of the Hindus.

The courts at Calcutta were not insufficient for the ordinary requirements of the settlement, but their jurisdictions were ill-defined, and their constitutions were not wholly satisfactory. There was no provision for the appointment of experienced lawyers as judges. As a consequence, judicial power was exercised by men who had no training in law. The Company's servants acting as judges were not always even senior in age and service. As the courts were more or less an off-shoot of the executive machinery itself, executive power and judicial authority were concentrated in the hands of the same persons, *i.e.* the governor and council. Bolts's denunciation of the whole system of justice is doubtless exaggerated and biased, but it at least serves to expose the anomalous character of a system under which, to use his own words, "the governor and council could, in

72 Bolts, *Considerations*, Chapter IX. Verelst, *View*, Chapter V. *Second Report*, 1772. *Sixth Report of Committee of Secrecy*, 1773.

73 Bolts, *Considerations*, 27-28. Verelst, *View*, 80-83.

fact, be the parties to prosecute, the magistrates to imprison, the judges to sentence, the sovereigns to order execution, and such despots in authority that no grand or *petit* jury would easily venture to disoblige them".

INLAND TRADE

One of the crying evils of the period was the participation of the Company's servants in inland trade. They freely misused the Company's *dastak* to secure exemption from internal duties and grasped nearly the whole of the country's inland trade. Such was the enormity of the evil that Clive himself had to admit that the Company's servants and their Indian *gomastas* had 'traded not only as merchants, but as sovereigns', and had 'taken the bread out of the mouths of thousands and thousands of merchants, who used formerly to carry on the trade, and who are now reduced to beggary'.⁷⁴

While the Indian merchant starved for want of his customary profits which were now monopolized by the Company's servants, the cruelty and highhandedness of their *gomastas* brought ruin to the poor ryot who was not only forced to purchase goods at abnormally inflated prices—a practice called *burjat* or *guchavat*—but was fleeced and tormented in innumerable other ways. Regulations were issued to check the evil practices of the *gomastas* but to no effect. It is to the credit of the directors that they not merely condemned⁷⁵ the conduct of their rapacious servants in the severest of terms, but specially charged Clive with the task⁷⁶ of remedying the evils of private inland trade.

Clive and his council took up the work of reform in right earnest in October 1764 when they resolved⁷⁷ to restrict the private trade of the Company's servants in salt and betelnut under specific conditions, and made the payment of duty obligatory. They also issued strict orders forbidding the oppressive practice of selling goods at prices above the market rate. But the scheme which they finally adopted in 1765 for the purpose of putting the inland trade on an equitable footing was the establishment of a company, known as the Society of Trade.

The plan of the Society of Trade which was originally adopted by the council at its meeting held on 10 August 1765 had the following features. The society was to be an exclusive company entrusted with

⁷⁴ Clive's speech, House of Commons, 30 March 1772.

⁷⁵ Letter from Court, 8 February 1764; 26 March 1765; 24 December 1765.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 1 June 1764.

⁷⁷ Bengal Secret Consultations, 17 October 1764.

the whole trade in salt, betelnut and tobacco, and was to be composed of all those who might be deemed justly entitled to a share. A proper fund was to be raised by a loan at interest in support of this trade. All salt, betelnut and tobacco produced in or imported into Bengal would be purchased by this society by contract on reasonable terms, and then resold at selected places to the country merchants through its agents. A Committee of Trade consisting of four persons was to be appointed for the management of the whole scheme.

When the plan came up for final consideration before the select committee on 18 September, it was agreed that it would be more to the interest of the Company 'to be considered as superiors of this trade and receive a handsome duty upon it than to be engaged as Proprietors in the stock'.⁷⁸ The rates of duties were prescribed and it was estimated that the Company would get 'a clear revenue of at least £100,000' per annum from these duties. The proprietors in the stock were to be arranged into three classes. The first was to comprise the governor with five shares, the second member of the council with three shares, the general with three shares, the gentlemen of the council with two shares each, and two colonels with two shares (in all 35 shares). The second was to consist of one chaplain, fourteen junior servants and three lieutenant-colonels, in all 18 persons, each of them being entitled to one-third of councillor's proportion or two-thirds of one share (in all 12 shares). The third was to be composed of 13 factors, four majors, four first surgeons at the presidency, two first surgeons in the army, one secretary to the council, one sub-accountant, one Persian translator and one sub-export-warehouse-keeper, in all 27 persons, each of them being entitled to one-sixth of a councillor's proportion or one-third of one share (in all 9 shares). The plan was finally approved and confirmed by the council on 25 September.

The authorities at Calcutta justified the institution of this peculiar society on several grounds. It would (they argued) remove the inconveniences of free trade, indemnify the Company's senior servants who were entitled to *dastaks*, benefit the Company by giving it half the profits in the shape of duty, and provide for the people commodities at cheaper prices. As the salaries paid to the Company's servants were inadequate, and as they were not allowed to accept private presents, they needed extra emoluments to maintain themselves in this country and return home with comfortable fortunes. It was pointed out that in the past the trade in salt used to be a monopoly of the nawab's favourites.

Despite all that was urged in favour of this venture, it was perem-

⁷⁸ Bengal Select Committee, 18 September 1765.

ptorily discountenanced by the directors. They rightly emphasized that it was consistent neither with their honour nor with their dignity to promote such an exclusive monopoly which was bound to perpetuate the abuses of the inland trade to the detriment of the local inhabitants. But their prohibitory orders⁷⁹ reached Calcutta in December 1766, a little too late, for the term of the society had already been renewed for another year in previous September on a slightly amended plan.⁸⁰ This second plan marked certain innovations, including the increase of the number of shares to 60 as also of the duty payable to the Company. In obedience, however, to the orders of the directors, Clive and the select committee decided on 16 January 1767 that this society was to be abolished and the inland trade totally relinquished on the first day of September next. It appears that the society was actually wound up on 14 September 1768.

Though the Society of Trade was disapproved, the fact was undeniable that the salaries of the Company's servants were absurdly low. For example, even a councillor's salary was scarcely £300 per annum, but, according to Clive, a councillor required at least £3,000 to make both ends meet. The same proportion held among the other servants whose salaries were very much lower. The basic salary of the youngest writer was only £5 per year, though his total remuneration amounted to Rs 400 per annum because of some extra allowances he received. One of the principal sources of their income was usury, but even this was interdicted by Clive and his select committee who decided in 1765 that no servant of the Company was to lend at a higher rate of interest than 12 per cent per annum.⁸¹ The practice of receiving gratuities from the nawab or his ministers was also disallowed⁸² by the directors in 1766. In order to inculcate economy, the latter issued some grandmotherly regulations in 1767 prohibiting⁸³ extravagant living, but even these could hardly meet the situation. They were not allowed to hold farms of lands, and Clive and his select committee prohibited them from doing this on pain of suspension from the service.⁸⁴ Their misuse of the *dastak* too was prohibited more than once, and their participation in the inland trade was looked upon with severe displeasure. Their right to receive private presents in any shape was also taken away by Clive under orders from the

79 Letter from Court, 17 May 1766.

80 Bengal Select Committee, 3 September 1766. Bengal Public Consultations, 8 September 1766.

81 Bengal Select Committee, 5 October 1765.

82 Letter from Court, 17 May 1766.

83 Ibid, 24 March 1767.

84 Bengal Select Committee, 5 October 1765.

directors. The only lawful source of income still left open to them was trade in the articles of export and import only, although its scope was extremely limited on account of the growth of the Company's own investments. The abolition of double *batta*, enforced with an iron hand by Clive, caused special hardship to the military officers.

With a view to providing the senior servants with something more than a bare living the directors decided in 1767 to grant them a percentage on the revenues. The grant was meant, in the words of the directors, "to give them a reasonable encouragement to exert themselves with zeal and alacrity in their several departments, but which they are to look upon as a free gift from the hand of their employers, offered to them annually so long as the present revenues shall remain with the Company, and their behaviour shall continue to merit such a reward".⁸⁵ A total amount calculated on the basis of 2½ per cent on the net revenues was to be divided into 100 shares for appropriation by the principal civil and military servants in graded proportions fixed by the directors. Among civilians, while the governor was to have 31 shares, a junior member of the council was to have only one share and a half. Among the military officials, a colonel was to have two shares and a half, while a major was allowed only three-quarters of a share. The junior military officers were to receive an extra daily allowance in compensation for the loss of double *batta*. While a captain was to have three shillings a day, an ensign was allowed only one shilling. In a subsequent order of 1770,⁸⁶ the directors laid down a new plan of distribution, according to which one-eighteenth part of the percentage was to be set apart for major-general Coote, commander-in-chief, while the remainder, divided into 100 parts, was to be distributed among the principal officials in proportions slightly different from those specified above.

This belated generosity on the part of the directors failed to check the greed and rapacity of their servants. They received the percentage, and still made large fortunes from private trade which they managed to carry on under the names of their Indian *banians*. In short, these *banians* who actually became the lords of their European masters were the source of the worst oppression in the country. Warren Hastings thus wrote about them, "Were the *banian* himself the appointed tyrant of the country, there would be less danger of his abusing his power to a great excess, because being responsible and having no real dignity or consequence of his own, he might be easily called to an account for his conduct, and made to suffer for it. But, as his master is the responsible person, he is encouraged to go to what

⁸⁵ Letter from Court, 20 November 1767.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

lengths he pleases in the certainty of impunity, and I am sure he will go to all lengths, because he has no tie or principle to restrain him."⁸⁷ In almost similar vein Clive described how the *banian* was the evil genius of the Company's servant. He said in his speech in the House of Commons on 30 March 1772, ". . . he (the Company's servant) is in a state of dependence under the banian, who commits such acts of violence and oppression, as his interest prompts him to, under the pretended sanction and authority of the Company's servant." Thus, both the Company's servants and their Indian *banians* and *gomastas* combined to spread the baneful effects of monopoly and extortion on every side. The root of their malevolence lay too deep in the dual system of government for any superficial reforms or regulations to reach and destroy.

COMPANY'S ARMY

The responsibility for the defence of the subah lay with the Company, for under an agreement with the nawab⁸⁸ concluded early in the year 1765 the governor and council at Calcutta had engaged themselves to secure to him the subahdari of the provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and to support him in that office with the Company's troops against all enemies. They had expressly promised to keep at all times such force as might be necessary for this purpose. The nawab, on his part, had agreed that as the Company's forces would be cheaper and more serviceable than any he himself could maintain, he would engage no troops except such as would be required for civil administration and his own personal needs, and disband the rest of his useless rabble. Soon after Clive's assumption of office the nawab was disallowed to keep even his own palace troops, and was forced⁸⁹ to accept about 1,500 of the Company's sepoyes on the plea that this step would warrant a deduction of 18 lakhs of rupees from his stipulated allowance.

The Company's Bengal army in 1765 consisted of 19 battalions of sepoyes, 4 companies of artillery, 24 companies of European infantry, one troop of hussars and about 1,200 irregular cavalry. Clive reorganized this army on a new basis which lasted throughout the period of the diwani administration. The principal features of this reorganization were as follows: The hussars were incorporated with the European infantry which was increased and divided into three single-battalion regiments of nine companies each. The irregular cavalry

⁸⁷ Letter from Court, 23 March 1773,

⁸⁸ Bengal Secret Consultations, 20 February and 28 February 1765.

⁸⁹ Bengal Select Committee, 7 September 1765.

was mostly disbanded. The whole army was finally grouped in three brigades, each composed of a troop of cavalry, a company of artillery, a regiment of European infantry, and seven battalions of sepoys. The battalions, one from each brigade, in conjunction with eight new battalions, solely dependent on the revenue authorities, were specially set apart for the unsoldierly work of enforcing revenue collections under the designation of parganah battalions. It was a semi-disciplined force which earned a distinct notoriety in this period by its highly oppressive conduct towards the defenceless ryots and its frequent insubordination to the civil authorities.

The problem of defence as it presented itself to the English in this period was one of military forbearance. They were against aggression outside Bengal, and would not act offensively against any power, unless they were forced to do so in self-defence. Clive and his successors believed that, as far as the country powers were concerned, they were so distracted and divided that their ambition could never turn towards Bengal, and that if a firm alliance could be maintained with the immediate neighbours, the latter would constitute an effective barrier or ring-fence to Bengal. An Afghan invasion was, however, the only nightmare that kept the authorities at Calcutta on tenterhooks and nearly all through this period the Abdali menace compelled the English to keep themselves in readiness to counteract it by either diplomatic manoeuvres or military precautions. Allahabad and Chunar were made the advanced outposts for the defence of Bengal, as they commanded the main entrance into this province from the west. The authorities at Calcutta always insisted on retaining English troops at both these places not only as a necessary check against the ambition of the emperor, the nawab-wazir of Awadh or the Marathas, but for guarding against unforeseen irruptions from the north-west, and for holding the general balance of power in Hindustan. In fact, the frontier policy of the English was founded on the basic principle of balance of power, for they recognized the fact that security lay not in a policy of isolation or inactivity, but in the maintenance of a balance of power in the country.⁹⁰

CIVIL VERSUS MILITARY POWER

What constituted from Clive's day a thorny question in respect of the Company's army was its ever-recurring attitude of independence towards the civil executive. The problem of due subordina-

90 Letter to Court, 28 March 1768.

tion of the military to the civil authorities, which had always been present since the early days of the Company, was particularly acute in Bengal during this period. Although the directors insisted⁹¹ that the military must be kept subordinate to the civil government, only a master-hand like Clive could enforce this principle. He stubbornly fought against military insubordination and enforced the stoppage of presents, gratuities, and, above all, double *batta*. A dangerous conspiracy of the army officers, following the abolition of double *batta*, was resolutely faced and broken up by Clive, and the guilty were either bound down or promptly cashiered. All through his term of office Clive continued to inculcate total subjection of the army to the civil government.⁹² In his farewell letter to the select committee he gave a clear warning: "If you abate your authority over them, inconveniences and uneasiness to yourselves may not be the only consequence... I would have it remembered that the immediate power is vested in yourselves to dismiss any officer, let his rank be what it will, without waiting for the sentence of a court-martial."⁹³

Clive's immediate successors, Verelst and Cartier, who possessed neither his soldierly abilities nor his resolute will, tried to follow in his footsteps, but could not avoid serious disagreements with the military circles. The frequent and acrimonious altercations between the civil executive and the commander of the Company's forces during this period serve to illustrate a transitional stage in the history of the early administrative system of the English in Bengal. Among these, one queer but important disagreement was in connection with the rival claims of governor Verelst and colonel Smith to the title and privileges of the commander-in-chief. Verelst held that the governor, by virtue of his office, was the commander-in-chief as well, for the directors had recently laid down, "Our Governor shall be considered as Commander-in-chief of our forces."⁹⁴ The dispute had originally ended in a peculiar compromise under which, while the governor was to be the commander-in-chief, colonel Smith was to be treated as commander-in-chief under the presidency; but this anomaly was later removed by the select committee in favour of the governor. Verelst's want of firmness in this affair prompted a rebuke from Clive who wrote to him from England that Smith's claim was 'an open and audacious attack' upon the dignity of the governor's office. "Had a minute been made of it", Clive added,

⁹¹ Letter from Court, 1 June 1764.

⁹² Letter to Court, 30 September 1765.

⁹³ Bengal Select Committee, 16 January 1767.

⁹⁴ Letter from Court, 19 February 1766.

"he would infallibly have been dismissed the service."⁹⁵

Even a cursory examination of Verelst's dispute with colonel Smith would serve to reveal the weakness and irresolution of the civil executive. That Smith had been guilty of insubordination was clear; yet the governor and his council fought shy of taking the drastic step of punishing or dismissing him. In their letter of 30 June 1769 the directors re-affirmed their previous ruling and observed, "...our Governor is to all intents and purposes the Commander-in-Chief of our forces and whatever orders he sends to any officer must be obeyed." But even this failed to prevent disagreements in the time of governor Cartier. He had some trouble on account of the attitude of independence assumed by general Barkar; along with his council, he had to make a formal representation to the directors against it. Thus, although the principle of complete subjection of the military to the civil authorities was an admitted fact and was consistently adhered to by Clive and his successors, the traditional rivalry between men of the sword and those of the pen was accentuated now and again either by personal jealousies, or mere professional arrogance, and on the whole the relations between the two were far from cordial in this period. While a soldier-administrator like Clive could rule the army with a strong hand, the civilian governors who followed him found it difficult to maintain the supremacy of the civil authority. The ostensible military basis on which the English political influence was founded in India made the position of the civil authorities at times somewhat disagreeable and hazardous. The anomalous character of the dual system of government on the one hand, and the ever-present jealousy between the two arms of the civil executive—the council and the select committee—with ill-demarcated powers and jurisdictions on the other hand, constituted a recurring source of unseemly and factious disagreements from the time of Clive to that of Cartier. Such wrangles could hardly give Bengal a strong and effective civil authority.

RELATIONS WITH COUNTRY POWERS

The foreign policy initiated by Clive and continued throughout the diwani period was one of cautious moderation, based on a realistic grasp of the practical possibilities and dangers inherent in the situation facing Bengal on all its vulnerable sides. The fundamental principle underlying this policy was the avoidance of conquest and

⁹⁵ Letter from Clive, 7 November 1767. (*Malcolm, Life of Lord Clive*, II, 213-14).

dominion outside the existing limits of the province. The defence of Bengal itself was an arduous charge. "To go further", Clive maintained in one of his letters to the directors, "is in my opinion a scheme so extravagantly ambitious and absurd that no Governor and Council in their senses can adopt it, unless the whole system of the Company's interest be first entirely new modelled."⁹⁶ The limits of the nawab's dominions, he argued, were 'sufficient to answer all' the Company's 'purposes', political and commercial. "By grasping at more", he warned his masters, "you endanger the safety of those immense revenues, and that well-founded power, which you now enjoy, without the hopes of obtaining an adequate advantage."

Clive's policy was based on sound political and military considerations. Extension of dominion to distant areas might prove to be a burden on Bengal, both financially and militarily, and was likely to stir up serious trouble with the country powers. On the other hand, a pacific policy alone could "conciliate the affections of the country powers... remove any jealousy they may entertain of our unbounded ambition... convince them that we aim not at conquest and dominion, but security in carrying on a free trade, equally beneficial to them and to us". The security of Bengal, for which the Company was responsible, was to be sought rather in the discordant views and interests of the neighbouring powers than in a policy of aggression against them. If ideas of conquest were to be the basis of English policy, Clive apprehended that the Company would, by necessity, be led from one acquisition to another. There was also the important fact that, owing to the enormous requirements of the Company's own trade investments, it was impossible to find money to undertake distant wars. This he mentioned to general Carnac immediately after his arrival in Bengal: "...the expense has now become so enormous that the Company must inevitably be undone, if the Mahrattas or any other power should invade Bihar and Bengal, for it will then be impossible to raise money sufficient to continue the war." Hazards of war would not contribute to the prosperity of trade. From the administrative point of view also territorial expansion would be inadvisable. When a sufficient number of competent English officials could not be had for the administration of Bengal itself, it was out of the question to assume the responsibility of government outside the province. The historic treaties which constituted the basis of Clive's political settlement with Shuja-ud-daulah and Shah Alam were obviously inspired by considerations such as these.

The settlement with the nawab-wazir which restored Awadh to him was no act of generosity. Conquest, partition or re-settlement of Awadh would each have involved risks which it would have been unwise to incur in the existing circumstances; "whereas if the nawab-wazir was restored, his immense resources, undoubted abilities and high influence could make him a serviceable and grateful ally and an effectual barrier to aggression against Bengal". The reinstatement of Shuja-ud-daulah was made with certain limitations⁹⁷ which converted Awadh into a useful buffer state. Its ruler was attached to the English not merely by the tie of gratitude, but also by the motive of self-interest, for the English were his only powerful neighbour from whom he had no fear of attack.⁹⁸ The settlement with Awadh was a middle course which cemented an enduring political alliance, and ensured the security of the Company's dominion in north India throughout its formative period.

After Clive's departure, the authorities at Calcutta maintained the alliance with Awadh from the conviction that gratitude, policy and necessity were bound to keep the nawab-wazir loyal to the English interest. Even though Shuja-ud-daulah's personal attitude and military preparations created occasional distrust, neither Verelst nor Cartier seriously apprehended any danger from him. The English policy towards him was based on the assumption: "If we soothe his vanity, and manage his foibles in trifles, we may lead, or even dictate, in essentials."⁹⁹ It was in pursuance of this principle that Verelst concluded a fresh agreement with Shuja-ud-daulah in 1768, by which the latter was obliged to limit his forces to a maximum of 35,000 men. Clive's settlement, thus amended by his successor, confirmed the nawab-wazir's military dependence on the English, for his plans to build up a formidable force of his own were finally nullified. The number of troops he was still allowed to retain was 'no more than a bare minimum which could render him respectable among the powers of Hindostan though in no degree sufficiently formidable to trouble the repose in these provinces'.¹⁰⁰ During Cartier's regime the nawab-wazir was repeatedly pressed to form a confederacy of north Indian powers against the Maratha invaders but he managed to maintain his neutrality, as he knew that the English were not prepared to send their own troops against the Marathas. Early in 1772, just before the close of Cartier's administration, Shuja

97 Bengal Select Committee, 7 September 1765.

98 Letter to Court, 8 September 1769.

99 Bengal Select Committee, 16 December 1769.

100 Letter to Court, 6 January 1769.

had to cede the strategic fort of Chunar for the absolute occupation of the English troops¹⁰¹ This last concession obtained in the diwani period from Shuja-ud-daulah marked the close of the first phase in the alliance between Awadh and the Company.

Clive's settlement with the emperor, which did not survive the diwani administration, was, like the one with the nawab-wazir, a middle course, prompted by a consideration of the realities of the situation. While it would have been inexpedient to abandon the emperor altogether, it was positively hazardous to escort him to Delhi. It was deemed equally foolish to put him in charge of the government of Awadh. Clive refused to play the role of a king-maker, conscious as he was of the limitations of the Company's power and position. He hit upon a simple expedient. While securing for the Company imperial patronage which, despite its nominal value, had still some importance in the eyes of the local princes and the other European nations, it provided at the same time for the emperor's maintenance and stay under English protection. It also created a bone of contention between the emperor and his wazir, rendering future alliance between the two well-nigh impossible. This plan was embodied in the treaty of Allahabad.¹⁰² The effect of the settlement was to legalize the Company's anomalous status in Bengal and convert the emperor into a stipend-earning rubber-stamp, treated with ceremonial respect, but only as a pageant.

The interminable intrigue and factious fight at the court of Allahabad, together with the emperor's natural discontent with his existing fate, presented in the diwani period problems which could admit of no solution without a radical change in the foreign policy laid down by Clive. The well-meaning but futile efforts of Verelst and Cartier to maintain the *status quo* serve only to illustrate the essential weakness of Clive's settlement. It was not possible for the emperor to remain content with a small stipend, and a still smaller demesne, for the dream of his life was to sit on the throne of his ancestors and restore the vanished glories of the Mughal empire. While Clive and his successors did not explicitly object to his cherished plan of a march to Delhi, and even held out vague promises of support from time to time, they never seriously intended to engage themselves in a hazardous expedition out of Bengal, nor had they the authority of the directors to make any commitment in this regard. The latter definitely warned in 1767, "... every step beyond the Caramnassa except in a defensive war will lead to the irretrievable ruin of our

¹⁰¹ Bengal Select Committee, 3 February 1772.

¹⁰² Ibid., 7 September 1765.

affairs.¹⁰³ It an attitude to benevolent passivity was kept up by Clive and his successors in the matter of the emperor's Delhi Scheme, it was because they regarded it, in the words of Clive, 'as the only means by which we can honourably get rid of our troublesome royal guest'.¹⁰⁴ After making two abortive attempts, the royal guest at last left Allahabad for Delhi in 1771, and reoccupied the imperial capital with Maratha assistance. His claim to the Bengal tribute, however, did not forthwith lapse with his departure; the Company continued to profess allegiance and pay the tribute until it was stopped by Warren Hastings.

Ever since the renewal of the menace of a Maratha invasion into Bengal in the years following the victory of Plassey, the authorities at Calcutta had been desirous of occupying Cuttack for the purpose of strengthening the frontier on that side and for opening up a direct passage by land to and from Madras. When Clive became governor for the second time, he sought to obtain Cuttack by peaceful negotiations with Janoji Bhonsle of Nagpur, who since his coming into possession of Cuttack after the death of his father, Raghujī Bhonsle, had been continually pressing the English for the chauth of Bengal. Clive considered an alliance with Janoji necessary for the security of Bengal, and, unwilling to risk an open rupture, he sought to make the payment of the chauth conditional on the cession of Cuttack.¹⁰⁵ The negotiations initiated by Clive and assiduously continued by his successor proved abortive in the end.¹⁰⁶ Janoji who had entered into these negotiations entirely from pecuniary considerations saw no benefit in giving up Cuttack which was a valuable base for his reserve forces. The unwillingness of the English to pay him chauth, notwithstanding his repeated reminders down to the time of Cartier,¹⁰⁷ was also partly responsible for the failure of the negotiations.

Alarmed by the rise of the Gurkha power and anxious to maintain free trade with Nepal, Verelst sanctioned in 1767 what may be regarded as the first English expedition to that country. It was ostensibly sent in support of the Newar ruler of Kathmandu, but the primary considerations that led the English to espouse the cause of the Newars against the Gurkhas were economic and military. The trans-Himalayan trade of Bengal had lately come to a standstill with the recent conquest of the submontane regions of Nepal, and it was

¹⁰³ Letter from Court, 4 March 1767.

¹⁰⁴ Bengal Select Committee, 16 January 1767.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 15 December 1769.

¹⁰⁷ *Calendar of Persian Correspondence*, I, Trans. R. 1771, No. 104.

necessary to reopen it. The recurrent Gurkha incursions from the adjacent *tarai* spelt a new danger to the security of Bengal's northern frontier, and the interests of self-defence demanded a counter-offensive against the Gurkhas in support of the friendly Newar princes. But the expedition failed disastrously for want of adequate troops and materials. A second expedition was proposed, but was not sanctioned by the select committee. After the eventual conquest of Nepal by the Gurkhas any armed intervention in aid of the Newar princes was out of the question. The English authorities sought to establish friendly relations with Prithvi Narayan, the Gurkha ruler, and sent one James Logan on a mission to him for this purpose.¹⁰⁸ This mission, however, produced no tangible results.

THE FRENCH AND THE DUTCH

Inside Bengal the relations between the English and their Dutch and French rivals were none too cordial, and were marked throughout the diwani period by mutual jealousy and continual disputes. The Dutch as well as the French authorities in Bengal envied the political and commercial ascendancy of the English, and fretted against the increasing restriction of their freedom and trade after the assumption of the diwani by the latter. Powerless to harm the English either by arms or by diplomacy, their rivals always grumbled at the interruption and decline of their commerce and bitterly complained of the vexatious opposition and highhandedness of the nawab's officials as well as the *gomastas* of the Company's servants. Such complaints not infrequently resulted in acrimonious disputes and unpleasant incidents which served only to reveal the intrinsic weakness of the Dutch and the French companies in Bengal under the changed conditions following the grant of the diwani to the English. The English on the other hand sometimes suspected secret and hostile designs on the part of their disgruntled neighbours and were ever alert lest the latter should seriously attempt to disturb the peace of the country.

TYRANNY AND EXPLOITATION

The story of the years that constituted the period of the diwani administration in Bengal makes dismal reading and one cannot escape the verdict that the period was probably the darkest in the history of that province. Though the English had become the *de facto* masters of Bengal, they cynically maintained a *faineant* nawab to serve as a mask, and while they enjoyed the fruits of the diwani,

108 Bengal Public Consultations, 31 October 1769.

divorced from its fundamental responsibilities, they reduced the nizamat to a tinsel sham. The breakdown of a system under which power and responsibility rested in different hands was inevitable, and it brought ruin to a province which in the past had flourished even under the most despotic government. It now knew no law and order, and the people were weighed down by oppression and plunder. While corruption was rife in all official ranks from the highest to the lowest, the Company's servants and their underlings made the Augean stable of anarchy all the more chaotic by their unscrupulous rapacity and commercial brigandage. The life-blood of the province was drained to appease the insatiable greed of all those who held power and trust. The province altogether presented a mortifying spectacle of tyranny and exploitation. The terrible famine of 1770 formed a tragic finale to the pitiful chapter of administrative confusion, ushered in by Clive who was more a consummate schemer than a far-sighted administrator, and continued by Verelst and Cartier, his timid and mediocre successors, who lacked the penetration and statesmanship to grasp its melancholy absurdity.

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INDEX

- Abbas, 66
Abdali, Ahmad Shah, 32, 33, 35, 36, 38, 42, 43, 45, 46, 48, 50-57, 59, 77-81, 83, 84, 86, 89, 94, 96, 97, 108, 109, 113, 115-23, 150, 154, 156, 159, 192, 217, 260, 261, 265, 267, 268, 274, 278, 279, 282-94, 326, 333, 335, 336, 427-29, 431, 434-37, 439-47, 449, 481, 486-88, 492-94, 496, 497, 500-2, 509, 511, 513, 659
Abdullah, Khwajah, 28
Abdullah, Mirza, 48
Abdullah, Qutb-ul-Mulk, 12, 20, 21, 23, 28
Abid Khwaja, 197
Adinanagar, 274
Adoni, 197, 217, 218, 366
Afghan, 27, 30, 33, 34, 47, 48, 50, 51, 53, 55, 56, 59, 60, 65-67, 76-84, 86, 89-93, 95-97, 108-17, 121, 123, 129, 139, 143, 147, 150, 151, 153, 160, 175, 185-57, 189-92, 195, 249, 263, 264, 267, 270, 273, 318, 336, 501, 502, 510, 521, 573, 611, 660, 672
Afridi, Rustam Khan, 154
Agra, 6-10, 12, 18, 20, 27-31, 34, 35, 38, 87, 91, 99, 102, 116, 210, 296, 306, 312, 317, 321, 322, 387, 388, 390, 497, 527, 528, 537, 542-44, 568, 586, 594
Ahluwalia, Jassa Singh, 261-64, 266, 271, 278, 280, 282, 284-86, 291, 293
Ahmedabad, 19, 306-8, 313, 345, 348, 368, 373-75, 483, 537, 543, 546
Ahmed, Haji, 177-80, 191, 646
Ahmednagar, 198, 212, 229, 397, 426
Ajmer, 9, 19, 30, 39, 108, 116, 210, 240, 303, 305, 306, 312, 317, 318, 320, 321, 324, 331, 385, 506, 543
Akhbar, 26, 204, 296, 397, 304, 310, 516
Akhtar Rushan, 18
Aknur, 77, 258
Alamgir II, 44, 46, 48, 49, 52, 88, 92, 119, 120, 122, 158, 269, 270, 277, 432, 435, 442, 670
Alamgir, Mirz Khan, 17
Alam, Shah, 48, 53, 56-61, 97, 112-24, 129, 133, 134, 135, 136, 139, 140, 143, 158, 162, 442, 451, 464, 481, 488, 490, 494, 501, 504, 518-20, 522, 523, 573, 670-672
Ali, Dilawar, 20
Aligarh, 51, 94, 114, 119, 121, 516
Ali, Haidar, 230, 423, 424, 455, 456, 458, 460, 462-70, 473-78, 480, 485, 487, 492, 641
Ali Husain, 10, 16-26, 28, 303, 354-357, 361
Ali Muhammad, 204, 222, 223, 230, 419, 423, 424, 464, 476, 616-620, 622-626, 628-630, 632, 634, 635, 644
Ali, Najabat, 26
Ali, Nizam-Alam, 20, 21
Ali, Safdar, 406, 407, 609, 611
Ali, Sayyid Husain, 202
Ali, Yaqub, 97
Allahabad, 8, 9, 11, 19, 20, 27, 28, 31, 35, 37, 56-58, 60, 61, 72, 99, 108, 111-14, 119-22, 124, 129-35, 155, 161, 162, 164, 165, 203, 240, 371, 387, 448, 494, 504, 508, 516, 519, 670, 671
Albuquerque, 533
Almora, 146, 147, 429
Alwar, 306, 309
Amaniganj, 184, 188, 191
Ambala, 67, 94, 294

- Ambalapuzha, 600
 Amber, 68, 219-23, 296, 300, 309, 313-18, 319, 337, 338
 Amin, Itimad-ud-daulah Muhammad, 16
 Amin, Mir Muhammad, 99
 Amir-ul-Umara, 3, 20, 21, 26, 31, 205
 Amritsar, 239, 251, 257, 261, 262, 264, 266, 278, 283-86, 289, 317
 Anandapur, 252, 253, 268
 Anglo-Dutch rivalry, 532-35
 Anglo-French: War, 612-20, 626-29, relations 612, struggle 644, rivalry 404, 455, 599
 Anglo-Mysore War: I, 467, 471; II, 480
 Angrial Kanhoji, 348, 351, 352, 356-58, 361, 375-81, 392, 419, 421, 631
 Anjengo, 600, 606
 Anola, 148, 149, 152, 153, 156
 Antaji, Manakeshwar, 311, 332
 Anwar-ud-din, 609, 611, 612, 614-15, 617-18
 Appa, Chimnaji, 215, 216, 401, 407, 412
 Arcot, 218-222, 224, 230, 365, 402, 406, 455, 459, 464, 467-69, 478, 479, 482, 590, 591, 598, 603, 604, 608-11, 613, 614, 617, 618, 620, 621, 623, 624, 626, 627, 630, 632-35, 638, 640, 644, 658
 Armenian, 193, 603, 615, 663
 Asaffah, 228, 230
 Asothar, 113
 Assam, 34
 Attock, 72, 87, 97, 118, 295
 Atungal, 600
 Aurangabad, 76, 83, 110, 198, 200, 201, 206, 209, 218, 225-28, 230, 265, 315, 340, 344, 356, 358, 365, 368, 389, 390, 457, 595, 626, 627
 Aurangazeb, 2, 9, 12, 26, 27, 34, 44, 51, 63, 64, 100, 118, 137, 138, 167, 170, 198, 204, 216, 300, 302-4, 306, 306, 309, 310, 313, 316, 318, 327, 344, 345, 350, 352, 365, 377, 451, 537, 559, 562, 566, 568, 569, 572, 573, 581, 593
 Aungier, Gerald, 563-65, 567
 Austrian Succession, War of 215
 Avadh, 20, 31, 32, 35, 39, 40, 49, 50, 57, 69, 82, 96, 97, 99-104, 106, 108, 111-14, 116, 119-23, 128-31, 133, 134, 135, 146, 147, 150, 152, 154-57, 159, 160, 163-66, 198, 213, 240, 322, 332, 385, 387, 404, 428, 431, 439, 450, 479, 481, 487, 493, 494, 502, 504, 505, 508, 513, 517, 519, 523
 Ayodhya, 101, 121
 Azam, 3, 198
 Azamgarh, 101, 413
 Azam, Sheikh Muhammad, 201
 Azimabad, 168
 Azim-ud-Shan, 1, 2, 4, 8, 167-69, 172
 Aziz-ud-daulah, Muhammad 42
 Azz-ud-din, 7, 9, 10
 Babur, 2, 13, 34, 232, 626
 Badakshi, 40, 42, 46, 48
 Bahadur, Beni, 129
 Bahadur, Girdhari, 19, 20, 26, 28, 203
 Bahadur, Guru Tegh, 232
 Bahadurgarh, 47, 426
 Bahawalpur, 286, 287
 Bahela, Bakshi, 190
 Bahrampur, 242, 389, 390, 396, 397
 Bhau, Sadasiva Rao, 229, 407, 410, 413, 422, 426, 439-44, 447, 448, 450, 487, 496
 Bai Udhams, 36, 37, 46, 109, 115, 430
 Bakhsh, Ram, 3, 27, 51, 118, 348
 Bakhshi, Mir, 68, 72, 199, 212, 213
 Balaji, Govind, 511
 Balapur, battle of, 205
 Balasore, 180, 183, 194, 538, 567-69, 572, 589, 607, 656
 Ballabhbagh, 41, 89, 110, 111, 431, 440, 442
 Ballal, Govind, 96, 405, 439, 442, 444
 Baluch, Aulila Khan, 47
 Bambhola, 386
 Banaras, 60, 101, 106, 113, 116, 120, 121, 129, 130, 132, 134, 166, 314
 Bangalore, 423, 463, 593
 Bangash, Ahmed Khan, 53, 59, 112-16, 120, 123, 155, 156, 159-62
 Bangash, Muhammad Khan, 9, 23, 27, 28, 110-12, 137, 142, 144, 148, 154, 210, 315, 371, 375, 382, 385, 386
 Bangash, Qalim Khan, 32

- Bankeybazar, 172
 Bankur, Chhat, 94
 Barabanki, 113
 Barari-Ghat, 51
 Bareli, 138, 139, 145, 152, 155, 160
 Barker, General Sir Robert, 61, 163-65, 517
 Barnala, 257, 278, 282
 Baroda, 308, 483, 484
 Bassein, 385, 392-97, 454, 465, 480, 485, 561
 Batala, 242, 243
 Batwara, battle of, 336
 Becher, Richard, 646, 651, 653, 656, 664
 Beg, Ahmed, 9
 Beg, Qalandar, 86
 Begam, Mughlani, 86, 88, 89
 Behgy, battle of, 293
 Balaghat, 358, 479
 Bengal, 1, 3, 8, 19, 20, 32, 34, 59, 60, 65, 75, 106, 120, 122, 124, 125, 127-29, 131, 133, 134, 136, 161, 167-82, 184-90, 193-96, 228, 310, 313, 314, 341, 387, 403, 448, 461, 643, 465, 466, 480, 481, 493, 494, 502, 519, 527, 538, 545, 552, 557, 559, 566-73, 576, 581, 582, 587-89, 602, 605, 607, 613, 633-35, 645, 646, 648-50, 654, 656-63, 667-69, 671-72
 Belgaum, 595
 Bellary, 595
 Benyon, Richard, 604
 Berar, 185, 197, 198, 206, 208, 229, 344, 353, 356, 358, 361, 365, 367, 391, 466, 471, 472, 501
 Beveridge, 133
 Bhagalpur, 185, 188, 191
 Bhakhar, 3
 Bhalki, treaty of, 229, 626
 Bhambhole, 323, 324
 Bharatpur, 38, 40, 51, 110, 155, 338, 495, 497, 501, 506, 508-10, 515
 Bhatinda, 282
 Bhau, Sadasiva Rao, 51, 52, 95-97
 Bhau, Gopal Ganesh, 489, 493
 Bhava, Shubnath, 327
 Bhilsa, 97, 449
 Bhim, Todah, 22
 Bhonsle, Fateh Singh, 204, 208, 235, 358, 366, 367, 378, 406, 594, 599
 Bhonsle, Janoji, 512
 Bhonsle, Kanhoji, 357
 Bhonsle, Raghuji, 32, 82, 184, 185, 187-80, 367, 391, 397, 400, 401-8, 410-13, 417, 418, 421, 461, 476, 596, 598, 599, 603, 608, 610, 618, 626, 627
 Bhopal, 30, 210, 211, 324, 345, 364, 386, 387, 391, 394, 503, 507, 513
 Bidar, 230, 457
 Bidnur, 459, 463, 468, 469, 476, 477
 Bijapur, 9, 197, 198, 214, 229, 230, 344, 581, 586, 587, 591, 593
 Bihar, 3, 8, 32, 34, 58-60, 99, 106, 121, 122, 124, 125, 127, 129, 133, 167, 168, 174, 180, 182-86, 188, 190, 192, 196, 493, 605, 646, 662, 663, 667, 670-72
 Bikanir, 309, 310, 339, 340
 Bilaspur, 241
 Binuwala, Visajai Krishna, 512, 513, 518, 519, 521-23
 Birbhum, 183, 188
 Bithur, 61
 Boddam, Thomas, 656
 Bokhara, 34
 Bollili, 634 -
 Bombay, 127, 376, 382, 392, 396, 397, 420, 452-54, 458, 462-63, 465, 468, 471, 480, 537, 542, 549, 553, 554, 559-66, 570, 576, 581, 582, 585, 604, 633, 655, 660
 Boone, Charles, 376, 377
 Boscawen, 616, 618
 Bourchir, 633
 Brindaban, 90-92
 Brome, 468, 470
 Brook, Captain, 299
 Brouch 537, 546
 Brown, Walter, 377
 Bundela, Govind Pant, 159
 Bundelas, 24, 27, 28, 72, 123, 211, 345, 370, 371, 396, 397, 486, 520, 510, 590
 Bundelkhand, 35, 59, 106, 122-25, 142, 321, 323, 326, 332, 336, 337, 356, 365, 370, 372, 383-85, 387, 388, 390, 391, 403, 405, 451, 481, 486, 487, 489, 490, 492, 503-8, 511-12

- Bundi, 12, 32, 297, 310, 318, 319, 323, 326, 327, 329, 330, 335, 336, 340, 341, 385
 Burdwan, 59, 167, 182, 186-88, 656
 Burhan-ud-din, 590, 595, 618
 Burhanpur, 198, 205, 214, 513, 537, 543, 626
Budge Budge, 658
 Burma, 527
 Bussy, 224-26, 229, 295, 417-19, 424-26, 619-21, 626, 627, 631-34, 637-49, 641, 643
 Buxar, 60, 72, 126-29, 160, 493, 503
 Buxar, battle of, 135
 Caillaud, Major, 58, 462, 464, 635, 672
 Calcutta, 124, 127, 129, 131, 133-35, 161, 167, 170, 172, 173, 176, 177, 183, 186, 187, 189, 192, 194, 465, 468, 469, 474, 478, 479, 542, 559, 567, 571-73, 589, 604, 605, 607, 633, 637, 646-48, 650, 654, 656-61, 663-65, 668, 669, 671-72
 Calicut, 541, 600, 606
 Cannanore, 541
 Cape Comorin, 34, 222, 225, 590
 Carnac, 59, 124, 126, 127, 130, 131
 Carnatic, 464, 469, 478, 479
 Champal, 12, 340, 488
 Chandela, Hindu Singh, 101
 Chandernagar, 194, 426, 489, 588, 605, 607, 608, 634, 636, 645, 650, 654, 660, 661, 663
 Chand, Fateh, 170, 173, 178
 Chand, Jai, 27
 Chand, Manik, 170
 Chand, Sabha, 6, 7, 11
 Chand, Ratan, 15, 18, 20, 22, 26
 Chanderi, 514
 Chandni Chowk, 74, 246
 Chandrachud, Gangadhar, 483, 507
 Chandragarh, 200
 Chandragiri, 536, 556, 557
 Chandra, Krishna, 195
 Chettuputtu, 624, 625, 634, 640
 Chhatra Sal, 27, 28, 121, 123, 142, 341, 371, 372, 384, 509
 Chicacole, 206, 226, 627, 634, 640
 Chidambaram, 597, 641
 Child, Sir John, 564-66
 Child, Sir Joshua, 574, 575, 577
 Chinglepet, 592, 623, 625, 626, 639
 Chittagong, 174, 567, 569, 570, 572
 Chokhanath, Vijaya Ranga, 592, 596
 Chunar, 60, 129, 130, 132, 134
 Churapnian, 12, 13, 22, 23, 29, 306, 495
 Clarendon, Earl of, 561
 Clive (6), 126, 131, 183, 185, 420, 425, 481, 504, 605, 617, 623-26, 632, 637, 644, 645, 658-61, 663-72
 Cochin, 541, 542, 544, 545, 599, 600, 606
 Cockayne, William, 549, 551
 Coen, 533-35, 537, 555
 Coimbatore, 477
 Coleroon, 48, 628
 Conjeevaram, 558, 559, 624, 639, 640
 Coorg, 594
 Coote, 640, 641, 644, 650
 Cope, Captain, 619, 620, 622
 Covelam, 600
 Coromandal, 194, 228, 416, 516, 537, 612, 613, 634, 637, 650
 Courten, Sir William, 548-50
 Court of Directors, 170, 177
 Cranganore, 541
 Cuddappah, 222, 225, 406, 422, 452, 591, 609, 619, 621, 635
 Cuddalore, 559, 586, 608, 616
 Cutch, 606
 Cuttack, 180, 181, 452, 634
 Cunningham, 287
 Dabhade, Khande Rao, 16, 308, 353, 354, 357, 368-70, 372-74, 378
 Dabhade, Yeswant Rao, 413, 414
 Dabhoi, battle of, 308
 D'Ache, Admiral, 636, 637
 D'Auteuil, 220, 221, 223, 618-20, 624, 625
 Dacca, 168, 174, 175, 183, 187, 193, 569, 604, 647, 651, 656
 Dadri, 49
 Dalton, Captain, 822, 223, 625, 628
 Dal Amlah, 145
 Damalcherry, battle at, 406
 Daman, 392, 393

Darbhanga, 190, 192
 Joriba Bazar, 74
 Das, Kewava, 327, 328
 Das, Kai Shiroman, 22
 Daulatabad, 226, 229, 426, 457
 Dauran, Khwajah Hussain Khan, 6, 7, 9, 25
 Dauran, Samsam-ud-daulah Khan, 12-14, 26, 27, 30, 31, 68-72, 102
 Day, Francis, 555-57, 568
 Deccan, 3, 13, 15-17, 19, 21, 27-31, 33, 35, 95, 108, 109, 156, 169, 180, 181, 194, 197-212, 214-19, 222, 223, 225-30, 238, 240, 321, 324, 329, 344, 345, 347-50, 353, 355, 361, 362, 364, 365, 370, 373, 385, 387, 389, 390, 396-99, 416, 423, 424, 445, 452, 458, 464, 465, 487, 489, 494, 495, 497, 501, 510, 517, 521, 523, 566, 590, 599, 603, 630, 633, 637, 638, 643
 De Conflans, Marquis, 637, 639
 Delhi, 4, 7, 8, 10-12, 16, 18, 25, 30-35, 38-42, 44, 45, 47-57, 59-62, 65, 67-69, 72-76, 78, 80, 81, 83-89, 91-95, 97, 99, 101, 104-11, 113, 115-18, 123, 134, 136-38, 141, 144, 147-49, 151, 154, 157-62, 164, 167, 169, 171, 183, 203, 205-7, 210, 212-14, 216, 218, 228, 237-41, 244-46, 254, 255, 261, 263, 264, 266, 267, 270, 271, 284, 296, 300, 304-6, 308, 310, 313, 315, 317, 321-24, 333, 336, 354-356, 360, 362, 383-91, 396, 397, 402, 416, 438-41, 452, 472, 481, 485, 487-89, 491, 497, 498, 500, 502, 513, 515, 517-19, 523, 608, 620, 656, 670, 671
 De Leysit, 632, 635, 636
 De Soupiré, Chevabœuf, 635, 636
 Deva, Ramachandra, 180
 Devakotta 620, 623
 Dharwar, 419
 Dholpur, 501, 506, 507, 509, 511
 Dhruv Dev, 243
 Dindigul, 455, 456, 593, 596, 641
 Divy Island, 222
 Dodwell, 615, 648, 630
 Dost, Ali, 215, 406, 609
 Downtown, Captain, 543
 • Drake, Roger, 646, 648, 650-54, 656
 Duff, Grant, 452, 454, 460, 485, 486, 619

Dumas, Benyist, 597, 608, 650
 Dungarpur, 297, 302
 Duplex, 219-27, 416, 419, 533, 588, 589, 599, 604, 606-8, 609, 612-622, 624, 626-631, 643
 Durai Sarai, 211, 212
 Durani, Ahmad Shah, 261, 263-65, 267, 269-73, 277, 280, 286, 290
 Durgadas, 302
 Durlabhram, Rai, 181, 657, 662, 666, 667, 670
 Duruha-Sarai, 402, 403
 Dutch, 192, 420, 526-35, 537-52, 545, 547, 548, 550, 551, 553-55, 558 560, 562-64, 567, 568, 592, 597, 601, 602, 605-7, 610, 646, 654, 657, 672
 Dutch Company, 193, 529, 585
 East India Company, 137, 172, 183, 193, 223, 340, 455, 478, 504, 516, 527, 528, 531, 534, 546, 550-53, 575, 578-81, 583, 607, 649, 663
 Elliot, 152
 Ellis, 124
 Elphinstone, 247
 Ellur, 227
 English, 59-62, 122; 124-36, 161-63, 165, 166, 172, 173, 183, 184, 187, 189, 193, 194, 215, 216, 221, 222, 226-30, 296, 351-52, 361, 375-77, 379-82, 392-95, 397, 420, 421, 425, 448, 453-55, 459, 462, 464, 466-70, 473, 474, 479, 480, 482, 494, 504, 513, 516, 517, 519, 521-27, 530, 532-35, 537, 540-47, 550, 552, 554-64, 566-74, 576, 578, 581-87, 597-607, 610-614, 616, 617, 619, 620, 622-626, 628-639, 641-644, 650, 652
 Ettawa, 8, 96, 114, 159, 161, 166, 516
 Faizabad, 104-6, 130
 Faridabad, 35, 39-41
 Farrukabad, 61, 110-12, 114, 123, 131, 137, 147, 153-57, 160-62, 192, 429, 517, 519
 Farrukhnagar, 49, 498
 Farrukh Siyar, 7-18, 26-28, 32, 33, 99, 111, 137, 138, 168-70, 172, 173, 199, 202, 203, 242, 243, 250, 302-7, 314, 318, 329, 353, 354, 602, 604
 Fatehpur, 102

- Fletcher, 130, 131, 504
 Forde, Colonel, 228, 637, 639, 644
 Forth, Dr., 648
 Franco, Muslim Alliance, 661
 Frankland, 654
 French, 126, 192, 194, 196, 215, 217-
 29, 418, 425-27, 465, 477, 553, 558,
 562, 578, 580, 584-89, 597-99, 601,
 604-8, 646, 657, 659-662, 665, 669
 French Company, 193, 227, 661
 Fryer, Dr. John, 564
- Gaffur, Abdul, 447
 Gaikwad, Damaji, 410, 414-16, 439,
 483, 507
 Gaikwad, Pilaji, 308, 363, 373, 375
 Canesh, Achyut Rao, 506
 Ganesh, Ramachandra, 161, 481, 512-
 14, 519, 520
 Ganga Rama, 183
 Gangawana, 310, 319; battle of 309
 Ganjam, 640
 Gardi, Ibrahim Khan, 426, 438, 446,
 448, 572
 Garhwal, 146
 Gauhar, Ali, 48, 49, 52, 120, 122
 Gauhar, Prince- Ali, 670, 671
 Gauhar-un-nisa, 92
 Gaya, 59, 185, 387, 672
 Gaya Devi, 59, 185
 Gayer, Sir John, 566
 Ghaffar, Shah Abdul, 22, 26
 Gharouli, 61
 Ghasiti, Begam, 632, 647, 648
 Ghatge, Sharja Rao, 200
 Ghaziabad, 53, 498
 Ghazni, 67, 78
 Ghazipur, 101, 126, 190
 Ghazi-ud-din, 229, 229, 417, 420, 626
 Ghorpade, Murari Rao, 215, 222,
 223, 402, 407, 422, 452, 456, 459,
 591, 595, 596, 598
 Ghorpade, Venkata Rao, 394, 395
 Ghulam, Ali, 595
 Goa, 392-95, 521, 538-40, 542, 543,
 545, 549, 550, 561
 Godchem, 227, 449, 631, 632
 Goen, Van, 540, 541
 Golconda, 344, 365, 536, 537, 545,
 554-59, 572, 585, 620, 621, 633
 Gordon, Captain, 394, 396
 Gosain, Rajendra Giri, 115, 118
 Gosain, Umaro Gir, 55
 Governor-General, 132
 Govind, Pant, 429, 440, 441, 443
 Gotbawli, 58
 Griffin, Commodore, 193, 616
 Gujarat, 19, 27, 30, 35, 68, 76, 83,
 110, 197, 209, 244, 253, 256, 258,
 261, 263-66, 268, 270, 272-75, 282,
 283, 286, 305, 307, 308, 312, 311,
 320, 322, 329, 344; 353, 356, 358,
 361, 363-366, 402, 483, 484, 535,
 537, 544-46
 Gujaraanwala, 263, 280
 Gujars, 47, 237
 Gurdan Nangal, 244, 245
 Gurdaspur, 242, 243, 260
 Gurgaon, 47, 49, 498
 Gwalior, 210, 324, 387, 389, 439,
 489-91, 495, 504, 507, 509, 511
 Gyftord, 559
- Habib, Mir, 187, 188, 191
 Hada, Budh Singh, 27
 Hadı, Mirza Muhammad, 167
 Haider, Jalal-ud-din, 37, 107
 Haider, Nasir-ud-din, 111
 Hamilton, 147, 604
 Hasanpur, 25, 361
 Hardwar, 139, 140, 520
 Harnaulgarh, battle of, 284
 Hastinapur, 396
 Hastings, Warren, 134, 165, 166, 533
 Hawkins, William, 525
 Hazrat, Ishan, 80
 Hedges, Robert, 571, 604
 Hindukush, 34, 65
 Hindupat, 59
 Hingne, Bapuji, 450, 488
 Hissar, 47, 49, 53
 Hodal, 28
 Holkar, Kanhoji, 352
 Holkar, Madhava Rao, 402, 404, 405,
 409, 410, 428-30, 432-34, 436, 498,
 502-10, 512, 514
 Holkar, Malhar Rao, 32, 42, 45, 51,
 54, 55, 93, 94, 102, 113, 116, 130,
 155, 156, 274, 316, 319-24, 326, 328,
 329, 333, 334, 336, 337, 343, 364,
 368, 382, 384, 395, 431-33, 437, 439,
 440, 445, 447, 462, 481, 483, 489-92,

- 496, 508, 517, 518, 626
 Holkar, Tukoji, 161, 334, 335, 483, 514, 517-19, 522, 523
 Holwell, 193, 647, 650-655
 Holland, 462, 483, 517, 513, 587, 601
 Hollowalia, Bagla Singh, 263
 Hosangabad, 513
 Hoshiarpur, 238, 362
 Hunter, W. W., 533, 545, 550
 Husain, Ghulam, 177, 191, 196, 243, 246, 656, 662, 667
 Hyderabad, 38, 109, 167, 204, 206-8, 218, 219, 225-30, 332, 353, 358, 365, 367, 416, 418, 424, 452, 453, 462, 472, 591, 595, 611, 627, 638
 Ibrahim, Muhammad, 5
 Ibrahim, Sheik, 634
 Imad-ul-Mulk, 39-52, 55, 57, 58, 87, 88, 93, 97, 115, 120, 122, 130 157-59, 270, 277, 430-34, 440, 442, 450, 488, 496, 516, 570
 Inayatullah, 26
 Indore, 336, 491, 498, 503, 509
 Intizam-ud-daulah, 37, 39-42, 50, 88, 89, 109, 113, 117, 118, 430, 431, 433, 434
 Iran, 65-67
 Irvine, 236, 244, 246, 306, 324
 Ishaq, Muhammad, 27
 Ismailabad, 56
 Itimad-ud-daulah, 68, 210, 305
 Itimad-ud-daulah II, Qamr-ud-din, 30
 Jadhav, Appaji, 442
 Jadhav, Chandrasen, 200, 201, 204, 209, 346, 348, 356, 362, 366, 367
 Jadhav, Dhanaji, 200, 346-48
 Jadhav, Pilaji, 321, 366, 368, 370, 371, 377, 381, 382, 384, 390-93, 402, 405, 447
 Jafar, Mir, 124, 126, 662-670, 671
 Jagadispur, 186, 190
 Jagan, Mir, 188
 Jahanabad, 61
 Jahangir, 296, 297, 304, 542, 544
 Jahan III, Jhah, 442
 Jaipur, 32, 33, 83, 108, 119, 120, 184, 296, 309, 310, 312-15, 319, 321-23, 325-39, 341, 355, 386, 409, 495, 506, 511, 514, 523
 Jai Singh, 278, 280, 291
 Jajau, battle of, 198, 341
 Jalalabad, 67, 78, 237, 238
 Jalesar, 102
 Jammu, 85, 242, 263
 Jang, Bahadur Nasir, 23
 Jang, Basalat, 217, 229, 456
 Jang, Ghazanfar, 225
 Jang, Ghazi-ud-din Khan Furuz, 31, 197, 198, 216
 Jang, Ghazi-ud-din Khan Ghalib, 9, 14, 39
 Jang, Haidar, 229, 426
 Jang, Mubariz-ul-Mulk Nawaz, 15
 Jang, Muzaffar, 162, 217-25, 227, 228, 599, 618-621
 Jang, Nasir, 31, 38, 109, 167, 210, 212, 214-18, 222-25, 385, 390, 391, 397, 403, 407, 599
 Jang, Rustam, 180
 Jang, Safdar, 31-33, 35, 37-44, 82-85, 104-21, 130, 147-49, 152-57, 184, 211, 217, 263-65, 404, 428, 430-32, 496, 499
 Jang, Saadt Khan Zulfiqar, 33, 108, 110
 Jang, Salabat, 17, 210, 214, 217, 225-30, 415, 417, 418, 421-26, 452, 455
 Jang, Zafar, 620, 621, 624, 626, 627, 629-635
 Jankiram, 188, 192
 Janoji, 187, 188, 191, 421, 457, 460, 467, 471-73, 483, 490, 507, 512
 Janoji, Shah Alam, 461, 462
 Jats, 11, 12, 15, 24, 27-29, 38-43, 47, 51-55, 57, 64, 109-111, 124, 140, 277, 290, 314, 337, 345, 388, 428, 441, 466, 481, 488, 491, 493-95, 497-500, 502, 503, 506, 507, 509, 516
 Jaunpur, 113, 130
 Jauhri, Hira Nand, 89
 Jhansi, 59, 123, 489, 490, 505, 507, 510, 511
 Jind, 47, 268
 Jinji, 587, 590, 591, 594, 625, 630, 640-642
 Jiwan, Suku, 266, 267, 283
 Jodhpur, 19, 27, 32, 303, 305, 307, 312, 324, 331, 335, 338, 355, 514
 Joshi, Babuji Naik, 401, 407, 408, 463
 Joshi, Visaji Krishna, 423, 455, 481, 519-20

- Jumla, Mir, 14, 15, 22, 568, 569
 Jung, Firuz, 198
 Jung, Nawab Souja-ud-Mulk Maha-
 bat, 193
 Jullundur, 79, 87, 93, 238, 262, 263,
 268, 271, 273, 435
 Kabul, 3, 16, 17, 19, 65, 67, 68, 72,
 77-79, 82, 83, 108, 266, 267, 290, 445
 Kabuli Mal, 285, 287, 288, 292
 Kadamtarji, 506
 Kalanaur, 242, 243, 248
 Kalha, Rai, 81
 Kalpi, 19, 27, 59, 122, 123, 131, 491,
 504, 507, 511, 664
 Kalyan, 351
 Kanauj, 99, 429, 480
 Kantakapur, 473, 483, 512
 Kandanur, 406
 Kandhala, 55, 87
 Kangra, 243, 295
 Kanpur, 59, 136
 Karan Khem, 201
 Karaikal, 597, 598, 608, 625, 636, 641
 Karnal, 31, 47, 68, 69, 73, 76, 87, 102,
 213, 235, 284
 Karnatak, 197, 208, 215-22, 224, 225,
 344, 353, 356, 358, 362, 364-66, 401,
 454-60, 461, 475, 477, 487, 536, 556,
 560, 586, 587, 590, 591, 593-95, 598,
 599, 602, 603, 609-611, 618, 620-622,
 626, 633-635, 646
 Karwar, 318, 376, 606
 Kashehari, Haidar Khan, 22
 Kashipur, 114, 141, 156
 Kashiraj, 97
 Kashmir, 3, 24, 25, 31, 43, 86, 106,
 231, 283, 285
 Kashmiri, Abdun-nabi, 24
 Kashmiri, Inayetullah, 15
 Kashmiri, Muhammad Murad, 14, 15
 Katauch, Ghumanand Chand, 280, 285
 Katwa, 182-84, 188, 665, 666
 Katehar, 138-41, 143, 145-47, 150-52,
 155, 157, 166
 Katra, battle of, 166
 Kaura Mal, 261, 263, 264, 266-68
 Khairabad, 155
 Khaiwa, 9, 10
 Khan, Abdullah, 354, 361
 Khan, Abdul Nabi, 145, 184, 594, 609
 Khan, Abdus Samad, 21, 23, 78, 92,
 94, 242-44, 250, 251, 254, 274
 Khan, Adina Beg, 47, 79, 81, 82, 85,
 86, 93, 262-65, 267, 269, 270, 272-76,
 435-37
 Khan, Afzal, 14, 55
 Khan, Ahamad, 429, 435
 Khan, Alam Ali, 19, 204, 205
 Khan, Ali Asghar, 8
 Khan, Ali Hamid, 237
 Khan, Ali Mardan, 49, 69
 Khan, Ali Muhammad, 138, 140-53
 Khan Ahvardi, 32, 35, 106, 118, 174,
 178, 182, 184-85, 187-93, 195, 403,
 404, 411, 605, 646, 649, 651, 653
 Khan, Allam, 206
 Khan, Amin, 148, 591
 Khan, Amir, 27, 31, 32, 342, 446
 Khan, Amur-ul-umara Husain Ali,
 202-4
 Khan, Amir-ul-umara Zulfiqar, 2-8,
 10, 11, 13-15
 Khan, Anwar-ud-din, 215, 219-22,
 407, 596, 598
 Khan, Aqibat Mahmud, 40-42, 45, 46
 Khan, Asad, 3, 6, 10, 11, 198
 Khan, Asad Yar, 27, 31
 Khan, Asad-ud-daulah Asad Yar, 31
 Khan, Asadullah, 25
 Khan, Ashraf, 9
 Khan, Atai, 97
 Khan, A'zam, 6
 Khan, Azimullah, 75, 142
 Khan, Azmatullah, 140-42, 149, 152
 Khan, Bahadur, 47, 254, 595
 Khan, Balabash, 50
 Khan, Baqir, 595
 Khan, Bhikari, 85, 269
 Khan, Bhikhan, 281, 286
 Khan, Burham-ul-Mulk Sa'adat, 31
 Khan, Chin Qilich, 10, 198, 199
 Khan, Dilir, 442, 443
 Khan, Dilwar Ali, 19, 203, 205, 206
 Khan, Dilvi, 27
 Khan, Dindar, 25
 Khan, Dundi, 94, 145, 152, 155, 159,
 438
 Khan, Duran, 384, 385, 387, 388
 Khan, Farid-ud-din, 149
 Khan, Ghazi-ud-din, 38, 622
 Khan, Ghaus, 170

- Khan, Ghulam Ali, 23
 Khan, Ghulam Husain, 125
 Khan, Hafiz Khidmatgar, 26
 Khan, Hafiz Rahmat, 59, 94-96, 139, 145-53, 155-63, 165, 166, 433, 439, 516, 517, 521
 Khan, Hafizud-din, 210, 217
 Khan, Haider Quli, 23, 26, 306, 373
 Khan, Haji Karim Dad, 97
 Khan, Hamid, 241, 373
 Khan, Harun, 84
 Khan, Hayatullah, 3
 Khan, Hidayat Kesh, 11
 Khan, Hidayat Muhi-ud-din, 217
 Khan, Hummat, 224
 Khan, Hussain, 268
 Khan, Inayat, 159, 160, 164
 Khan, Irandat, 6, 239
 Khan, Ishaq II, 31, 107, 154
 Khan, Itiquad, 14-17, 23
 Khan, Iwaz, 208, 267, 368, 594
 Khan, Izd-ud-daulah Iwaz, 206
 Khan, Jaffar, 170, 190
 Khan, Jahan, 78, 87, 90-94, 96, 267, 271, 272, 274, 277, 285, 288, 291, 293
 Khan, Hasan Ali Murad Kulkultash, 6-8
 Khan, Jalal, 237, 270
 Khan, Jamal, 81
 Khan, Javid, 36-39, 43, 109, 113, 117, 157, 430
 Khan, Khafi, 234, 238, 240, 244
 Khan, Khanan Mumim, 2, 198
 Khan, Khwajah Ibrahim, 266
 Khan, Khwajah Bakhtswar, 41
 Khan, Khwajah Ubaid, 280
 Khan, Iugman, 83
 Khan, Iutfullah, 9, 73
 Khan, Mahjuz, 221, 615, 616, 618, 632, 635
 Khan, Mahmud, 153, 155, 279
 Khan, Man, 37
 Khan, Manim, 3, 25, 199
 Khan, Mubariz, 28, 206, 361-65
 Khan, Muhammad, 28, 279
 Khan, Mir Haider, 22, 26
 Khan, Mirza Najaf, 162, 342, 520
 Khan, Muazzam, 152, 153
 Khan, Mubariz, 28, 206, 361-65
 Khan, Muhammad, 28, 279
 Khan, Muhammad Ali, 31, 32, 221
 Khan, Muhammad Amin (Itmad), 10, 14, 17, 19, 21-23, 26, 29, 198, 205, 206, 242, 245, 247
 Khan, Muhammad Ghaus, 179
 Khan, Muhammad Ghiyas, 201, 204
 Khan, Muhammad Jafar Taqarsub, 10
 Khan, Muhammad Quli, 58, 116, 120, 121, 670, 671
 Khan, Muhammad Taqi, 173, 175
 Khan, Mulbariz, 204, 361-65
 Khan, Murad Sher, 190, 191, 273, 285
 Khan, Murshid Quli, 8, 168, 169-75, 177, 180, 195, 573, 604, 605
 Khan, Murtaza Ali, 75, 190, 286, 407, 603, 610, 611, 617, 621, 624, 627, 632
 Khan, Musratyar, 25
 Khan, Mustafa, 184, 186, 189, 190, 605
 Khan, Mutaman-ud-daulah Ishaq I, 31
 Khan, Muzaffar, 27, 31, 419, 421, 422
 Khan, Najabat, 47
 Khan, Najaf, 60, 504
 Khan, Najib, 40, 47-50, 52-56, 58-60, 87, 89-92, 97, 121-23, 130, 157, 270, 434, 435, 439, 444, 445, 447
 Khan, Najm-ud-din Ali, 23
 Khan, Nasiri, 65, 67, 78, 82-84
 Khan, Nawazish Muhammad, 180
 Khan, Nisar Muhammad, 104
 Khan, Qalandar Beg, 87
 Khan, Qa'm, 110, 115, 148, 152-54, 371
 Khan Qutb-ud-din, 152, 220
 Khan, Rashid, 169
 Khan, Roshan-ud-daulah Zafar, 26
 Khan, Rustam Beg, 204
 Khan, Ruz-afzun, 42
 Khan, Sa'adat, 17, 22, 23, 26, 28-30, 69-73, 99-105, 213, 322, 384-88
 Khan, Sa'adatullah, 590, 591, 594, 595
 Khan, Sa'adat Yar, 278, 280, 285, 287
 Khan, Sabit, 23
 Khan, Sadullah, 11, 94, 110, 114, 151, 155, 217, 365, 429, 594
 Khan, Sa'd-ud-din, 31
 Khan, Safdar Ali, 595, 596
 Khan, Saf Shikan, 9
 Khan, Saif, 184, 191
 Khan, Salabat, 38, 312, 496

- Khan, Sarbuland, 8, 14-17, 19, 27, 99, 202, 278, 280, 283, 307, 308, 373, 374
 Khan, Sardar, 190, 191
 Khan, Sarfaraz, 605
 Khan, Sayyid Abdullah, 8-11, 13-16, 22-24, 26
 Khan, Sayyid Ahmed, 181
 Khan, Sayyid Aslam, 239
 Khan, Sayyid Hussain Ali, 8, 12, 13, 15, 205, 305, 314, 353, 590, 597
 Khan, Sayyid Lashkar, 225-27, 416-18
 Khan, Sayyid Muzaffar, 12, 306
 Khan, Shah Abdus Subhan, 187
 Khan, Shah Murad, 181
 Khan, Shah Nawaz, 67, 80, 84, 218, 223, 227, 229, 260, 261, 265, 266, 418, 425, 426, 619
 Khan, Shah Pasand, 78, 94, 96, 445-47
 Khan, Shah Vah, 51, 56, 78, 96, 446
 Khan, Shakir, 43
 Khan, Shakur, 25
 Khan, Shamshir, 190-92
 Khan, Shams, 238
 Khan, Shapur, 26
 Khan, Shariatullah, 10
 Khan, Shayistah, 17, 569, 570
 Khan, Shuja-ud-din Muhammad, 171-78, 195
 Khan, Siyadat, 104
 Khan, Ubaid, 285
 Khan, Umdat-ul-Mulk Ali, 31, 142
 Khan, Usman, 232, 285
 Khan, Wazir, 233
 Khan, Yahiya, 79, 259, 260, 261
 Khan, Yakub Ali, 51, 56, 336, 450, 488
 Khan, Zabita, 53, 56, 161, 162, 164, 165, 294, 501, 512, 518, 520, 521, 523
 Khan, Zahid, 263
 Khan, Zain, 281, 283, 285, 286
 Khan, Zain-ud-din, 9, 178, 180, 190, 191
 Khan, Zakaria, 32, 33, 67, 77, 79, 242, 245, 254, 258, 259, 261
 Khan, Zulfiqar, 198-200, 202, 559, 590, 591
 Khandoji, 41
 Khatri, Surat Singh, 277, 278, 340
 Khawaji, Diyanat Khan, 17
 Kher, Balaji Govind, 489
 Khizrabad, 10, 94
 Khurram, 537, 544
 Khwajah Husain, 7
 Khwaja, Mirza, 276, 279, 437
 Killavan, 491, 592
 Kishangarh, 506
 Knox, Captain, 59
 Koil, 41, 439
 Kolhapur, 200, 204, 205, 208, 401
 Konkon, 405
 Kora, 60, 61, 130-32, 135, 164
 Kotah, 12, 297, 318, 321, 324, 326, 329, 332, 335, 336, 340, 341, 385, 506
 Kothapur, 345, 346, 349, 356, 361, 366, 369
 Kotila, 50
 Kottarakara, 598
 Krishnadas, 647, 651, 652
 Kumaun, 141, 146-48
 Kunjpura, 47, 49, 69, 95, 290, 441, 442
 Kurnool, 222-24, 452, 591, 610, 619, 621
 Kurukshetra, 95, 442
 Kurwai, 513
 Lahore, 6-8, 32, 33, 43, 48, 53, 54, 67, 68, 72, 78-85, 87, 93, 94, 108, 116, 158, 238, 242-44, 254, 257-61, 263, 265, 268-71, 275-77, 283, 284, 287-89, 291, 292, 541
 Lakhor, 437
 Lally, Count, 227, 229, 426, 636-643, 645
 Langhorne, Sir William, 558
 Latif, 234
 La Touche, 224, 620
 Law, Jean, 59, 192, 193, 196, 625, 647, 657, 661, 662, 667, 670
 Lawrence, Major, 222-24, 616, 625, 629, 638, 644
 Lindsay, Sir John, 479
 Lohgarh, 235, 240, 242
 Lo Khori, battle of, 333
 Lucknow, 58, 94, 100, 101, 104, 112, 113, 115, 119, 120, 130, 132, 155, 198, 429, 461, 516
 Ludhiana, 81, 235
 Lunni, 87
 Utfullah, 50

- Machiwara, 81
 Madhava Rao, 452, 456, 458, 460-61,
 463, 464, 469-71, 473, 475, 477, 180-
 84, 492, 494, 523
 Madras, 223, 226, 227, 397, 419, 448,
 463-66, 474, 476-79, 537, 542, 545,
 552, 554-60, 563, 568, 569, 572, 581,
 582, 586, 595, 599, 602, 605, 610-619,
 623, 625, 629, 631-633, 635-638, 640,
 641, 645, 654
 Madura, 219, 540, 591-94, 596, 599-
 600, 617, 622, 632, 634, 635, 639
 Mahadji, Purandare, 407
 Mahadevur, battle, 408
 Mahal, Sahiba, 92
 Mahal, Zinat, 52
 Mahbub, 25
 Mahoba, 59
 Malabar, 466, 480, 538, 540, 542,
 544, 545, 564, 642
 Malcolm, Sir John, 239, 342, 493,
 497, 622
 Malerkotla, 81
 Malet, Sir Charles, 480
 Malhar, Shankarji, 353, 357
 Malika-i-Zamani, 92
 Mal, Kaura, 84, 85
 Mal, Raja Bakhat, 17
 Mal, Sukhjiwan, 84, 86
 Mal, Suraj, 29, 35, 42, 52-54, 87, 89,
 90, 94, 110-12, 114, 118, 119, 155,
 159, 331, 337, 428, 431, 434, 436,
 440, 445, 451, 488, 495-98, 501, 512
 Malwa, 12, 16, 19, 27, 28, 30, 32, 35,
 100, 203-5, 210, 212, 254, 260, 314-
 18, 320-24, 332, 336, 344, 356, 358,
 363-65, 370-75, 377, 382, 383, 385-
 88, 390, 391, 403, 405, 431, 436, 451,
 481, 486, 487, 489, 492, 503, 508-10,
 512, 514
 Mangrol, battle of, 337
 Manickchand, 656-658
 Manikpur, 61
 Mankara, 185
 Mankeshwar, Antaji, 331-32, 434, 435,
 448
 Mannu, Mir, 83, 261, 263-68
 Mansur, Abdul, 105
 Manapur, 33, 35, 81-83, 108, 185,
 261, 326, 327
 Marathas, 16, 17, 21, 27-32, 35, 40-
 46, 48-52, 54-57, 59, 61, 62, 64, 73,
 87, 88, 93-98, 102, 106, 108, 113-24,
 129-31, 133, 136, 155-66, 181-86, 189,
 191, 193-95, 197, 200-3, 205-08,
 215, 217, 220, 222, 223, 228-30, 273-
 75, 278, 312, 315, 316, 320, 340-43,
 401, 402, 454, 499, 502, 503, 511-13,
 515-18, 559, 562-64, 587, 609, 610,
 618, 621, 626, 628, 633, 635, 640,
 653, 663, 669
 Maratha invasion, 186-88
 Maratha war of independence, 345
 Marva, 592, 632
 Marwa, 506
 Marwar, 11, 16, 28, 297, 300-3, 307-
 11, 314, 321-23, 329-32, 374, 385
 Martanda Varma, 600
 Mashara, 155
 Masulipatam, 180, 222, 225-28, 230,
 418, 426, 535, 545, 554, 559, 567,
 581, 585-87, 589, 607, 619-21, 626,
 627, 630, 633, 634, 637, 639
 Mathews, Ensign, 671
 Mathura, 29, 41, 42, 52, 87, 90, 91,
 270, 314, 387, 388, 439, 488, 489,
 495-97
 Mau, 112, 149
 Mavi, Kamgar Khan, 191
 Mayurbhganj, 181
 Mecca, 25, 56
 Meerat, 523
 Mehendale, Balwant Rao, 422, 422,
 443
 Mewali, Bayazid Khan, 23
 Mewar, 297-300, 302, 315, 320, 322,
 323, 325, 326, 330, 333-36, 340, 341,
 384, 409, 506
 Mewat, 94, 497, 498
 Mian, Shajji, 153
 Midnapur, 167, 169, 174, 181-84,
 186-88, 670
 Mirzapur, 58, 101, 116
 Mitapur, 190
 Moghyr, 185, 191
 Moradabad, 15, 202
 Mostyn, Thomas, 465-68, 471, 480
 Mughalpura, 80
 Muhammad, Abdul Fath Zahir-ud-
 din, 23

- Muhammad, Dost, 364
 Muin-ul-Mulk, 37, 83-86, 109, 110, 116
 Multan, 3, 26, 32, 43, 44, 79, 84, 86, 116, 117
 Munim, Mir, 33
 Munro, Hector, 127-30
 Muqim, Mirza Muhammad, 103
 Muradabad 26, 116, 138, 140, 144, 146, 152, 240
 Muradnagar, 50
 Murshidabad, 173, 174, 178-85, 187, 188, 190-92, 576, 646-48, 654, 656, 658, 659, 662, 666, 667, 672
 Mutaman-ul-Mu.k, 167
 Multan, 254, 261, 263-66, 268, 273, 275, 287, 288, 293, 295
 Muzaffarnagar, 93
 Muzaffarnagar, 49
 Mylapore, 615, 625, 539
 Mysore, 222, 353, 406, 419, 455, 485, 461, 643, 466, 468, 474, 477, 479, 482, 591, 593, 595, 618, 623, 624, 626, 628, 632, 635, 641, 669
 Nabiganj, 61
 Nadia, 183, 195
 Nadir Shah, 27, 30, 32, 33, 35, 54, 62, 65-79, 81, 83, 102-4, 106, 110, 143, 211-14, 258, 261, 265, 296, 324, 385, 389, 396, 397, 428-30
 Nadir Shah's invasion, 102-7
 Nagapatam, 537, 540, 597, 613
 Nagar, Chhabila Ram, 8, 9, 12, 14, 19
 Nagar, Nilkantha, 29
 Nagarmal, 46
 Nagercoil, 600
 Nagpur, 182, 186, 187, 345, 400, 461, 462, 472, 483
 Nahar, 240, 241
 Najafgar, 160, 162
 Najibabad, 56, 160, 521
 Najib-ud-daulah, 158-61, 270, 277, 282, 290, 292-94, 336, 337, 446, 486, 488, 491, 494, 495, 498, 500, 501, 503, 508, 512, 515, 516, 518-20, 523
 Nanak, Guru, 237, 248
 Nanjanad, 599
 Nanjraj, 422, 455
 Narasappaiye, 591, 592
 Narayan, Raja Siddhist, 9
 Narela, 52, 76, 87
 Narnaul, 37
 Naro Shankar, 405, 440, 442, 444, 489
 Narwar, 12
 Nasir, Jafar Khan, 167
 Nasrullah, 70, 76
 Naubatpur, 190
 Nellore, 545, 618
 Neyyatinkara, 600
 Nikusiyar, 18, 28
 Nimbalkar, Darya Bai, 410
 Nimbalkar, Rambhuji, 200-1
 Nizamgarh, 47
 Nizampatam, 228, 535, 536, 554, 555
 Nizam-ul-Mulk, 14-17, 19-21, 23, 26-31, 33, 68, 102, 103, 108, 200-2, 204-17, 225, 306, 315, 324, 346, 352, 353, 357, 361, 362, 370, 373, 385, 386, 402, 403, 406, 407, 416-18, 421, 438, 448, 464, 594-96, 598, 608, 610, 611, 617, 621
 Nizam-ul-mulk Asaf Jah, 39, 102, 196, 197, 203
 North-West Frontier, 64, 79
 Omichand, 652, 653, 662-64
 Orissa, 32, 35, 60, 106, 133, 167-70, 173-75, 180-89, 461, 472, 475, 545, 567, 568, 605, 663, 667
 Orme, Dr. Alexander, 600, 615, 617, 625, 629, 632, 635, 640, 647, 668
 Orme, Robert, 600
 Oudh, 152, 670
 Oxenden, Sir George, 562, 563
 Pancholi, Beharidas, 302, 322
 Panch-pahari, 126, 127
 Pandit, Dalbir, 598
 Panipat, 26, 43, 44, 47, 52, 55, 59, 64, 76, 94-98, 108, 122, 124, 158-61, 277, 278, 284, 335, 423, 429, 440-41, 443, 448, 449, 451, 452, 454, 455, 458, 482, 485-88, 491-4, 497-99, 503, 508, 513, 516, 517, 521
 Panipat, third battle of, 335
 Panni, Daud Khan, 13, 16, 199, 201, 346, 352, 353, 357, 560, 590
 Pant, Balaji, 363
 Pant, Ramachandra, 346
 Passur, 76, 83, 110, 265

- Pataudi, 49
 Patdur, 441
 Patiala, 47, 56, 81, 278, 282
 Patil, Sabaji, 276
 Patna, 7-9, 15, 17, 19, 58, 59, 99, 106, 120, 122, 123, 126-28, 160, 168, 184, 187, 188, 190-93, 203, 538, 568, 569, 571, 604, 670-72
 Patparganj, 54, 55
 Patwardhan, Gopal Rao, 424, 455, 457, 459, 472, 474
 Pawar, Yawant Rao, 404, 439, 447, 448
 Persia, 78
 Peshwar, 65, 67, 77-80, 83, 108, 294, 328, 347, 507, 510, 513, 518, 523, 598
 Peter, the Great, 66
 Pigot, 635, 641, 644
 Pilibit, 146
 Pillai, Anand Ranga, 216, 615, 617, 641
 Pindaris, 96, 302
 Pingle, Bahiropan, 348, 351
 Pitt, John, 581, 582
 Pitt, Thomas, 560, 575, 582, 602
 Plassey, battle of, 185, 189, 662, 665, 666, 668, 669, 122, 228, 669
 Pondicherry, 219-27, 295, 477, 480, 586-89, 597, 604, 606-8, 609, 610, 612-21, 624, 626, 629-31, 633, 635-38, 642
 Poona, 156, 165, 185, 201, 209, 322-24, 326, 328, 347, 352, 356, 367, 368, 372, 386, 390-93, 397, 459-61, 464-66, 468, 471-72, 477, 480, 491, 530-5, 507-10, 512, 517, 518, 523
 Poonamalle, 625, 629
 Portuguese, 179, 313, 351, 352, 361, 376, 377, 379-81, 391, 393-95, 398, 399, 524-26, 528-30, 534, 536, 538-40, 542-45, 548-50, 552, 555, 558, 560, 564, 567, 571, 583, 592, 606
 Prakash, Bhup, 241
 Pratabgarh, 113, 116
 Prithvipati, 113
 Pudukkottai, 592, 594, 632
 Punjab, 11, 37, 50, 55, 56, 67, 68, 76-77, 79, 82-84, 86, 93-95, 97, 98, 108, 110, 116, 117, 119, 121, 158, 159, 231, 236, 238-40, 261-64, 266, 273, 275, 276, 278, 440, 445, 449, 486, 497, 500-2, 509, 511
 Purandar, 201, 442
 Purnea, 184, 191, 648, 653
 Qadriqiladar, Usman Khan, 203
 Qamr-ud-din, Khan, 21, 22, 26, 29, 31, 33, 37, 68, 69, 73, 75, 79, 81, 102, 107, 142, 221, 384, 385, 387, 388, 430
 Qamr-ud-din, Mir, 197
 Qandahar, 54, 78, 83, 87
 Qasimbazar, 187, 193, 196, 538, 568, 569, 571, 573, 589, 607, 633, 647, 652, 654, 656, 661-63, 665
 Qasim, Muhammad, 204
 Qasim, Mir, 60, 124-27, 129, 131, 132, 160, 493
 Qasim, Sidi, 11
 Qizilbashes, Shuzza Shah, 53, 60, 106
 Qudratullah, Shah, 11
 Quilon, 540, 541, 600
 Quli, Haider, 22, 24
 Qutb-ul-Mulk, 12-14, 16, 18, 22, 202, 203, 205
 Raghaba, 467, 507, 509, 510
 Rafi-ud-darjat, 5, 17, 23, 26, 203
 Rafi-ud-daulah, 5, 18, 203
 Raji-us-shan, 1, 3, 5
 Rahim-un-nisa, 26
 Rai, Bhagwant, 239
 Rai, Dalpat, 67
 Rai, Hukumat, 46
 Rai, Lakhpat, 67, 255, 257, 259-61, 263, 266, 267
 Rai, Majlis, 24, 25, 75
 Rai, Nawal, 111, 112, 115, 154
 Raipur, 181
 Rai, Shitab, 154
 Rajballabh, 647, 651
 Rajahmundry, 227, 627, 634, 637, 639
 Rajasbai, 205, 209
 Rajput, 12, 18, 28, 29, 59, 64, 68, 72, 82, 94, 101, 104, 111, 138, 139, 179, 183, 209, 211, 302-4, 306, 309, 310, 312, 314-16, 319-21, 332, 335-37, 341-44, 355, 357, 370, 384, 385, 389, 396, 397, 439, 448, 482, 486, 490, 491, 493, 499, 502, 505, 506, 513, 514, 518
 Rajputana, 11, 31, 32, 35, 42, 161, 203,

- 238, 258, 296, 297, 303, 304, 305, 310, 311, 312, 318, 320, 321, 323, 324, 327, 329, 332, 334, 336, 337, 339, 341, 342, 355, 356, 385, 386, 409, 433, 451, 481, 486, 491, 494, 506
Kakshasbhuvan, 456, 457, 461
Ram, Atma, 102
Ram, Bhaskar, 182, 184-86, 196, 198, 199
Ramgarh, 439
Ramghat, 165
Rama Varma, 600
Rameswaram, 540
Ramkanta, 195
Ramnagar, 113
Ramnarain, 192, 667, 670-72
Ramnath, 195
Rampura, 320, 321, 323
Ram Raja, 401, 410-15
Ram Ranni, 264, 265, 276
Ranisarai, 187
Ranthambhor, 82, 312, 326
Rao, Amrut, 405
Rao, Balaji, 27, 28, 30, 68, 208-12, 296, 304, 308, 315, 322-24, 343, 347, 354, 360, 361, 363-72, 374, 375, 377-79, 382-91, 393, 395-400, 402, 406, 419, 428
Rao, Balaji Baji, 32, 50, 97, 106, 182, 185, 228, 229, 324, 327, 347-58, 377, 379, 382, 383, 385, 400, 401, 424, 451, 452, 454, 460, 461, 482, 483, 487, 492, 507, 599, 635
Rao, Bhawan, 457
Rao, Duransal, 321
Rao, Govind, 484
Rao, Khande, 326, 432, 455
Rao, Murar, 475, 610, 619, 623-28, 630, 632, 639, 640
Rao, Narayana, 165, 471, 477, 480, 481, 484
Rao, Parashram, 351, 352
Rao, Raghu Nath, 45, 49, 50, 93, 120, 274, 275, 332, 334, 426, 431-36, 438, 449, 452, 453, 455-57, 459, 460, 462, 467, 470-73, 483, 484, 492, 503, 507, 512, 594
Rao, Sayaji, 484
Rao, Sis, 183
Rao, Srpat, 599
Rao, Trimba, 417, 456, 475, 476, 478, 479
Rao, Vishwas, 95, 97, 425, 426, 438, 447, 448, 452, 504, 505
Raste, Anand Rao, 455, 473, 474, 476
Ray, Jaswant, 175
Raza, Mir, 463, 473, 474, 476
Raza, Muhammad, 17
Razi, Sarai Sayyid, 59
Rewa, 58
Rewari, 41, 49, 94 .
Rohtak, 47, 49, 498
Rohtas, 127, 281
Ruhela, 9, 27, 31, 32, 38-40, 43, 44, 47, 48, 50, 53-55, 58, 67, 87, 89, 92, 94, 96, 97, 107, 109, 110, 113-15, 117, 121, 124, 130, 138-40, 142, 143, 145-52, 154, 155-66
Ruhela, Abdul Karim Khan, 196
Rhela, Ali Muhammad Khan, 35, 81, 110
Ruhela, Daud Khan, 138-41, 143
Ruhela, Dilir Khan, 442, 443
Ruhelkhand, 32, 35, 38, 50, 58, 107, 110, 112, 114, 121, 130, 137, 138, 140, 152, 156-58, 164-66, 192, 517, 520, 522, 523
Rukun-ud-daulah, 462, 468, 473
Rurkela, 294, 331, 396, 428, 429, 431, 440, 442, 446, 448, 449, 472, 489, 492, 494, 496, 398-501, 503, 506, 507, 508, 509, 511, 515, 516, 517, 521, 522
Rushan-ud-daulah, Zafar Khan, 17
Sabaji, 187
Sabhoji, Ganesh, 491
Sachendi, 113
Sadar, Mullak, 94
Sadhaura, 235, 236, 240, 242
Sadiq, Lutfullah Khan, 7, 15
Saharanpur, 40, 47, 94, 142, 160, 237, 294, 501
Sahib, Bhau, 407, 410, 413, 422, 426, 439-44, 447-48, 450, 487, 496
Sahib, Chanda, 215, 218-24, 406, 595-97, 599, 603, 608-610, 617, 618, 620-625, 628, 632, 636, 638
Sahib, Raza, 220, 221, 624, 638
Sakhararam, Bapu, 407, 449, 456
Salabat, Sayyid, 17

- Salaudi, 235
 Salem, 593
 Saisette, 454, 466, 480, 561, 562
 Sambhaji, 401, 407, 410, 414, 419, 451,
 482
 Sambhal, 116, 146
 Samin, Ghulam Hasan, 89, 91
 Samsam-ud-daulah, 210, 212, 213, 227,
 321
 Santaj Wagh, 448
 Santal Parganas, 183, 672
 San Thome, 556, 558, 586
 Sarabhoji, 592, 597
 Sarai, Azimabad, 68, 69
 Sarai, Raja, 67
 Sardesai, 316
 Sarkar, Sir J. N., 44, 62, 87, 310, 316
 Sarphoji, 208
 Sasaram, 58
 Satara, 182, 218, 315, 329, 345, 346,
 355, 378, 380, 386, 400, 401, 403, 404,
 407, 409, 412, 415, 452, 457, 595, 599,
 610
 Saunders, 226, 620-624, 627, 631, 644
 Savanur, 222, 223, 229, 452, 458, 463,
 473, 619, 621
 Sayir, Muhammad, 590, 505, 598
 Scrafton, 192, 657, 660, 663, 665, 668,
 670
 Sekhokji, 378, 419
 Serangapatam, 419, 422, 424, 452,
 463, 473-75, 485, 594
 Seth, Jagat, 190, 657, 662, 665
 Seven Years War, 635, 644, 645
 Shahabad, 9, 67, 155, 163, 164, 180,
 190
 Shah, Ahmed, 35, 36, 38, 42, 43, 45,
 46, 78-81, 83, 84, 86, 89-94, 96, 97,
 109, 117, 154, 159, 428, 432, 442, 450
 Shah, Akbar, 113, 118
 Shah, Alam II, 336-37, 442, 451, 494
 Shah, Azam, 345, 352
 Shahadara, 54, 80, 96
 Shah, Bahadur, 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 11-13,
 26, 27, 139, 169, 198, 238, 239, 241,
 248, 303, 304, 310, 314, 318, 348, 353
 Shah, Baladil, 80
 Shah Dan, 512
 Shah, Hirdey, 28
 Shah Jahan, 1, 3, 5, 18, 73, 76, 197,
 217, 304, 340, 568
 Shah Jahan II, 51, 52
 Shahjahanbad, 51
 Shah, Jahahnd, 3
 Shah, Jahandar, 1, 3, 5-11, 13, 14, 26,
 44, 169, 199, 242, 303 314
 Shahjahanpur, 138, 146, 306
 Shah Muhammad, 18, 25-30, 32-36,
 64, 65, 69-76, 78, 81, 83, 92, 99, 103,
 104, 106-8, 142, 143, 147, 151, 174,
 184, 203, 206, 213, 214, 217, 296,
 302, 305, 314, 317, 320, 361, 396, 428,
 495
 Shah of Iran, 66
 Shah, Qutli, 47
 Shah, Sabir, 80
 Shah, Shah Alam Bahadur, 42
 Shah, Timur, 48, 92, 93, 158
 Shahi, Sawai, 592, 597
 Shahu, 17, 199-202, 208, 209, 304, 308,
 315, 316, 326, 327, 345-48, 349, 351-
 60, 362-67, 369, 371, 372, 374, 376,
 377, 379, 381, 385, 386, 394, 396,
 398, 400, 401, 402, 404, 405, 407,
 408, 410, 411, 461, 481, 482, 594,
 598, 599
 Shah, Wali Khan, 291, 446
 Shaikhzadas, 100, 101
 Shambhaji, 200, 205, 208, 209, 245,
 345-47, 355-57, 361, 362, 365-69, 378-
 82, 392
 Shamli, 87
 Shankar, Nuro, 52, 95, 96
 Sharf-ud-din, Mir, 179
 Sheorajpur, 59
 Sherpur, 59
 Shiabs, 38, 59, 120
 Shiats, 25
 Shilal-ud-din, 197
 Shikobabad, 159-61, 166, 489, 516
 Shivaji, 315, 344-46, 348, 349, 352,
 353, 358, 363, 365, 371, 377, 378,
 392, 406, 558, 559, 562-64, 587
 Shivaji III, 410
 Shivdev, Vithal, 49
 Shoro, 176, 177
 Shuja-ud-daulah, 49, 57-59, 61, 94, 96,
 107, 120-36, 157-66, 171-73, 290, 337
 Shukartal, 50, 437, 520
 Sialkot, 76, 83, 109, 279, 285, 286
 Sidi, 347, 351, 352, 361, 375-80, 392-
 95, 398, 454, 566

- Sikandrabad, 39, 41, 42, 45, 53, 61, 94, 117, 432, 439
 Sikh, 12, 27, 53-56, 60, 64, 84, 93, 97, 98, 231-51, 255, 257, 258-67, 269, 271, 337, 338, 345, 490, 501, 502, 506, 511-14, 553
 Sindhia, Dattaji, 50, 51, 94, 158, 277, 331, 333, 433, 434, 436-38, 487
 Sindhia, Jayappa, 113, 116, 155, 313, 328-32, 409, 428, 433
 Sindhia, Jankoji, 276, 333, 334, 429, 436, 439, 445
 Sindhia, Mahadji, 61, 161, 162, 321, 334, 335, 342, 481, 484, 492, 502, 503, 505-10, 512-14, 517-23
 Sindhia, Namaji, 370, 484
 Sindhia, Ranaji, 32, 316, 319, 320-24, 326, 364, 382-85, 395, 402, 404, 405, 409, 410, 428, 503, 505, 506
 Sindhia, Sabaji, 93, 436
 Sindhia, Tukoji, 448, 594
 Singh, Abhai, 27, 303, 306-12, 317, 321, 323, 374, 385, 387
 Singh, Ajit, 11, 12, 16, 18, 19, 28, 29, 303, 304-, 311, 314, 340
 Singh, Ala, 81, 257, 278
 Singh Ali, 235, 271, 286, 287, 290, 291
 Singh, Amar, 56
 Singh, Badan, 28, 29, 337, 495
 Singh, Bakht, 32, 306, 311-13, 330
 Singh, Balwant, 113, 116, 120, 129, 132
 Singh, Banda, 231-34, 236-38, 240-51, 253, 254, 292
 Singh, Bhai Mani, 257
 Singh, Bijay, 179, 277, 313, 329-32, 335, 336, 338
 Singh, Budh, 32, 294, 318, 319, 323, 326, 341
 Singh, Dalil, 32, 318, 319
 Singh, Gujjan, 271, 278, 280, 286, 291-94
 Singh, Gulab, 240, 241, 291
 Singh, Guru Govind, 231, 233, 246, 248, 250, 252
 Singh, Hari, 263, 271, 274, 278, 280, 285, 287, 291, 295
 Singh, Hira, 287, 293
 Singh, Iswari, 32, 33, 82, 108, 312, 324-29, 332, 333, 339, 409, 428, 495
 Singh, Jagat, II, 320, 323, 325, 326, 333
 Singh, Jasan, 19
 Singh, Jassa, 264, 271, 274, 291
 Singh, Jawahir, 53-55, 90, 289, 290, 293, 337, 338, 596, 498, 500, 510, 503, 506, 507, 510-12
 Singh, Jhanda, 263, 274, 285, 288, 291, 295
 Singh, Kapur, 256, 262, 265
 Singh, Khush Lal, 312
 Singh, Lehna, 271, 274, 278, 280, 291-93
 Singh, Madho, 32, 119, 227, 313, 325-28, 331-33, 335-39, 341, 409, 431, 433, 436, 451, 491, 511
 Singh, Muhkam, 22, 29, 306
 Singh, Nabar, 338, 501, 506
 Singh, Nawal, 512, 514-16
 Singh, Pratap, 319, 333, 334, 339, 598, 599, 611, 629
 Singh, Raja Bhim, 12, 318, 341
 Singh, Ram, 32, 318, 330, 331, 341
 Singh, Ranjit, 295, 512, 514, 516
 Singh, Rathor Indar, 307, 309-11, 313, 315, 317, 330, 334, 339
 Singh, Rattan, 498, 513
 Singh, Sakta, 301, 302
 Singh, Sangram, II, 300, 325
 Singh, Sawai Jai, 12-15, 19, 23, 26-30, 32, 68, 82, 102, 209, 210, 212, 303-5, 308-10, 312, 315-20, 322, 325-27, 329, 333, 337, 341, 342, 364, 367, 371, 383-86, 399, 402, 403, 409, 495
 Singh, Sumer, 113
 Singh, Sunder, 191
 Singh, Surat, 340
 Singh, Udai, 297
 Singh, Ummed, 319, 327, 329, 340, 433
 Singh, Zorawar, 309
 Sira, 423, 463
 Siraj-ud-daulah, 129, 188, 192, 193, 196, 425, 634, 646, 648, 649, 654-657, 659-667, 670
 Sirhind, 32, 33, 47, 53, 67, 77, 81, 92-95, -07, 108, 149-51, 231-37, 240, 257, 261, 268, 271, 282-87, 290, 293, 294, 435, 437
 Siranji, 211, 441, 449
 Sitapur, 105, 112
 Sivaji, 208
 Smith, Captain, 640
 Smith, Richard, 133, 134

- Sombansi, Prithvipati, 116
 Somepat, 76, 95, 440-43
 Spain, 525, 531, 580, 588, 601, 612
 Srirangani, 622, 625, 628, 629, 644
 Srirangapattan, 366, 632, 641
 Stephenson, 246
 Sud, Kishan Chand, 46
 Sukarchakia, Charat Singh, 261, 263, 268, 271, 278-280, 284, 285, 288, 289, 291, 295
 Sukartal, 93, 94, 121, 158, 162
 Sultanganj, 191
 Sultanpur, 104, 238
 Sunda, 269, 476
 Sunnis, 38, 53, 59
 Suraj-ud-daulah, 633
 Surat, 170, 363, 372, 376, 466, 480, 537, 538, 540-46, 548, 551, 552, 556, 560-66, 570, 581, 582, 585-87, 589, 606, 607
 Surman, John, 172, 246, 604

 Tahmasp, Shah, 66, 67
 Tanjore, 208, 219, 223, 353, 365, 406, 476, 479, 591, 592, 594, 597-99, 611, 618, 620, 623, 625, 628-630, 632, 636-639, 641
 Tara Bai, 345, 410-12, 415-17, 453
 Tarakpur, 184
 Taraori, 94, 442
 Tatya, Gangadhar, 328, 435, 450, 488
 Teliagarhi, 179
 Tellicherry, 600, 612
 Tevar, Sasivarna Periya Udaya, 592
 Thaneswar, 68, 76, 87
 Thattab, 3
 Thun, 12
 Tikari, 185
 Timur, 37, 57
 Timur Shah, 270-74, 277, 294, 435
 Tinnevelly, 593, 621, 632, 634, 635
 Tipu Sultan, 230, 474
 Thiruvannamalai, 221, 610, 640
 Tiruithi, 628, 629, 641
 Tod, 297-300, 302, 303, 307, 311, 313, 314, 316, 318-20, 323, 325, 327, 329, 330, 333-37, 340, 341, 463
 Travancore, 591, 599
 Trichinopoly, 208-10, 215, 216, 219, 221, 222, 230, 353, 402, 406, 592-97, 618, 620-625, 628-630, 632, 641, 644

 Tripura, 175
 Tughlakabad, 440
 Tukoji, 481, 592
 Tulaji, 208, 420, 476
 Tumkur, 593
 Turani, 19, 21, 31, 39, 85, 102, 106-11, 113, 117, 118, 125, 197-99, 203, 245, 323
 Turkoman, 66
 Turkey, 66, 442
 Tuticorin, 540

 Udaipur, 32, 296, 319, 323, 325, 333, 355, 386, 396, 506, 514
 Udgir, 229, 426, 427, 438, 449, 451, 455
 Ujjain, 204, 314, 316, 364
 Uttar Pradesh, 101, 202
 Utrecht: treaty of, 600

 Valondavur, 222
 Varma, Unni Kerala, 600
 Varma, Martanda, 600
 Varma, Rama, 600
 Vellore, 219, 221, 406, 407, 609, 618, 621, 625, 632-634
 Venkatakrishnaiya, 592
 Venkataraghavacharya, 592
 Viddhadhar, 327, 328
 Villiyallur, 219, 222, 641
 Vishwanath, Peshwa Balaji, 16, 17, 201, 315, 346, 347, 360, 481
 Vyankoji, 208, 365, 591

 Wakinkhera, 197, 198
 Waliullah, 152
 Wandiwash, 556, battle of, 639, 640
 Watson, Admiral, 126, 193, 420, 425, 633, 657, 658, 660, 661, 663, 664
 Watts, 647, 651, 652, 662, 663, 665
 Wazirabad, 68, 84, 88, 267
 Weddall, 548
 Wellesle, Lord, 132, 230
 Wendal, 338
 Wilks, 473, 474, 477, 594, 609, 622
 Winter, Sir Edward, 557
 Wyndham, 525

 Yadgar, Ahmad, 285
 Yaminabad, 68

 Zain-ud-din, 184
 Zamania, 190

